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MORANG'S LITERATURE SERIES

Narrative Poems

EDITED WITH NOTES BY
JOHN C. SAUL, M.A.

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1906

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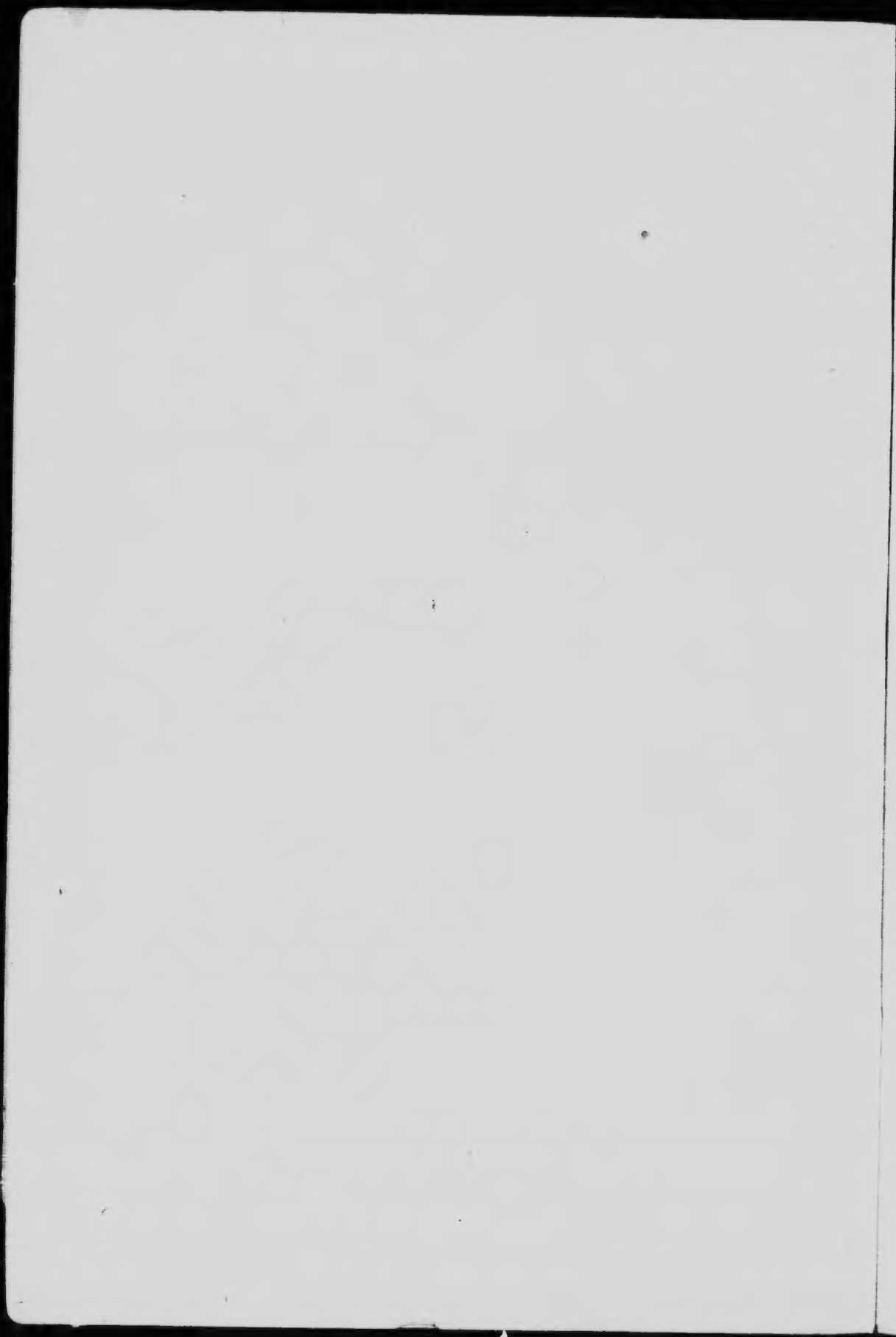
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NARRATIVE POEMS

KALLUNDBORG CHURCH

"Build at Kallundborg by the sea
A church as stately as church may be,
And there shalt thou wed my daughter fair,"
Said the Lord of Nesvek to Esbern Snare.

And the Baron laughed. But Esbern said,
"Though I lose my soul, I will Helva wed!"
And off he strode, in his pride of will,
To the Troll¹ who dwelt in Ulshoi hill.

5

"Build, O Troll, a church for me
At Kallundborg by the mighty sea;
Build it stately, and build it fair,
Build it quickly," said Esbern Snare.

10

But the sly Dwarf said, "No work is wrought
By Trolls of the Hills, O man, for naught.
What wilt thou give for thy church so fair?"
"Set thy own price," quoth Esbern Snare.

15

"When Kallundborg church is builded well,
Thou must the name of its builder tell,
Or thy heart and thy eyes must be my boon."
"Build," said Esbern, "and build it soon."

20

¹ **Troll**—A dwarf gifted with superhuman powers.

By night and by day the Troll wrought on;
He hewed the timbers, he piled the stone;
But day by day, as the walls rose fair,
Darker and sadder grew Esbern Snare.

He listened by night, he watched by day, 25
He sought and thought, but he dared not pray;
In vain he called on the Elle-maids¹ shy,
And the Neck and the Nis² gave no reply.

Of his evil bargain far and wide 30
A rumour ran through the country-side;
And Helva of Nesvek, young and fair,
Prayed for the soul of Esbern Snare.

And now the church was wellnigh done;
One pillar it lacked, and one alone;
And the grim Troll muttered, "Fool thou art! 35
To-morrow gives me thy eyes and heart!"

By Kallundborg in black despair,
Through wood and meadow, walked Esbern Snare,
Till, worn and weary, the strong man sank 40
Under the birches of Ulshoi bank.

At his last day's work he heard the Troll
Hammer and delve in the quarry's hole;
Before him the church stood large and fair:
"I have builded my tomb," said Esbern Snare.

And he closed his eyes the sight to hide, 45
When he heard a light step at his side:
"O Esbern Snare!" a sweet voice said,
"Would I might die now in thy stead!"

¹ **Elle-maids**—The fairies.

² **Neck and the Nis**—The Neck is the River-Spirit and the Nis a general name for the goblins or brownies.

With a grasp by love and by fear made strong,
He held her fast, and he held her long;
With the beating heart of a bird afeard,
She hid her face in his flame-red beard.

50

"O love!" he cried, "let me look to-day
In thine eyes ere mine are plucked away;
Let me hold thee close, let me feel thy heart
Ere mine by the Troll is torn apart!

55

"I sinned, O Helva, for love of thee!
Pray that the Lord Christ pardon me!"
But fast as she prayed, and faster still,
Hammered the Troll in Ulshoi hill.

60

He knew, as he wrought, that a loving heart
Was somehow baffling his evil art;
For more than spell of Elf or Troll
Is a maiden's prayer for her lover's soul.

And Esbern listened, and caught the sound
Of a Troll-wife singing underground:
"To-morrow comes Fine, father thine:
Lie still and hush thee, baby mine!

65

"Lie still, my darling! next sunrise
Thou'lt play with Esbern Snare's heart and
eyes!"

70

"Ho! ho!" quoth Esbern, "is that your game?
Thanks to the Troll-wife, I know his name!"

The Troll he heard him, and hurried on
To Kallundborg church with the lacking stone.
"Too late, Gaffer¹ Fine!" cried Esbern Snare;
And Troll and pillar vanished in air!

75

¹ **Gaffer**—Applied as a title, usually of respect, although the word means "an old man."

That night the harvesters heard the sound
 Of a woman sobbing underground,
 And the voice of the Hill-Troll loud with blame
 Of the careless singer who told his name.

80

Of the Troll of the Church they sing the rune
 By the Northern Sea in the harvest moon;
 And the fishers of Zealand hear him still
 Scolding his wife in Ulshoi hill.

And seaward over its groves of birch
 Still looks the tower of Kallundborg church,
 Where, first at its altar, a wedded pair,
 Stood Helva of Nesvek and Esbern Snare!

86

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

THE BELL OF ATRI

At Atri in Abruzzo, a small town
 Of ancient Roman date, but scant renown,
 One of those little places that have run
 Half up the hill, beneath a blazing sun,
 And then sat down to rest, as if to say,
 "I climb no farther upward, come what may,"—
 The Re Giovanni, now unknown to fame,
 So many monarchs since have borne the name,
 Had a great bell hung in the market-place,
 Beneath a roof, projecting some small space
 By way of shelter from the sun and rain.
 Then rode he through the streets with all his train,
 And, with the blast of trumpets loud and long,
 Made proclamation, that whenever wrong
 Was done to any man, he should but ring
 The great bell in the square, and he, the King,
 Would cause the Syndic to decide thereon.
 Such was the proclamation of King John.

5

10

15

How swift the happy days in Atri sped,
What wrongs were righted, need not here be said. 20
Suffice it that, as all things must decay,
The hempen rope at length was worn away,
Unravelled at the end, and, strand by strand,
Loosened and wasted in the ringer's hand.
Till one, who noted this in passing by, 25
Mended the rope with braids of briony,
So that the leaves and tendrils of the vine
Hung like a votive garland¹ at a shrine.

By chance it happened that in Atri dwelt
A knight, with spur on heel and sword in belt, 30
Who loved to hunt the wild-boar in the woods,
Who loved his falcons with their crimson hoods,
Who loved his hounds and horses, and all sports
And prodigalities of camps and courts;—
Loved, or had loved them; for at last, grown old, 35
His only passion was the love of gold.
He sold his horses, sold his hawks and hounds,
Rented his vineyards and his garden-grounds,
Kept but one steed, his favourite steed of all,
To starve and shiver in a naked stall, 40
And day by day sat brooding in his chair,
Devising plans how best to hoard and spare.

At length he said: "What is the use or need
To keep at my own cost this lazy steed,
Eating his head off in my stables here, 45
When rents are low and provender is dear?
Let him go feed upon the public ways;
I want him only for the holidays."
So the old steed was turned into the heat
Of the long, lonely, silent, shadeless street; 50
And wandered in suburban lanes forlorn,
Barked at by dogs, and torn by brier and thorn.

¹ **votive garland**—A wreath of flowers hung before a shrine in pursuance of a vow.

One afternoon, as in that sultry clime
 It is the custom in the summer time,
 With bolted doors and window-shutters closed, 55
 The inhabitants of Atri slept or dozed;
 When suddenly upon their senses fell
 The loud alarm of the accusing bell!
 The Syndic started from his deep repose,
 Turned on his couch, and listened, and then rose 60
 And donned his robes, and with reluctant pace
 Went panting forth into the market-place,
 Where the great bell upon its cross-beam swung,
 Reiterating with persistent tongue,
 In half-articulate jargon, the old song: 65
 "Some one hath done a wrong, hath done a wrong!"

But ere he reached the belfry's light arcade
 He saw, or thought he saw, beneath its shade,
 No shape of human form of woman born,
 But a poor steed dejected and forlorn, 70
 Who with uplifted head and eager eye
 Was tugging at the vines of briony.
 "Domeneddio!"¹ cried the Syndic straight,
 "This is the Knight of Atri's steed of state!
 He calls for justice, being sore distressed, 75
 And pleads his cause as loudly as the best."

Meanwhile from street and lane a noisy crowd
 Had rolled together like a summer cloud,
 And told the story of the wretched beast
 In five-and-twenty different ways at least, 80
 With much gesticulation and appeal
 To heathen gods, in their excessive zeal.
 The Knight was called and questioned; in reply
 Did not confess the fact, did not deny;

¹ **Domeneddio**—An Italian exclamation of surprise.

Treated the matter as a pleasant jest, 85
And set at naught the Syndic and the rest,
Maintaining, in an angry undertone,
That he should do what pleased him with his own.

And thereupon the Syndic gravely read
The proclamation of the King; then said: 90
"Pride goeth forth on horseback grand and gay,
But cometh back on foot, and begs its way;
Fame is the fragrance of heroic deeds,
Of flowers of chivalry and not of weeds!
These are familiar proverbs; but I fear 95
They never yet have reached your knightly ear.
What fair renown, what honour, what repute
Can come to you from starving this poor brute?
He who serves well and speaks not, merits more
Than they who clamour loudest at the door. 100
Therefore the law decrees that as this steed
Served you in youth, henceforth you shall take heed
To comfort his old age, and to provide
Shelter in stall, and food and field beside."

The Knight withdrew abashed; the people all 105
Led home the steed in triumph to his stall.
The King heard and approved, and laughed in glee,
And cried aloud: "Right well it pleaseth me!
Church-bells at best but ring us to the door;
But go not in to mass; my bell doth more: 110
It cometh into court and pleads the cause
Of creatures dumb and unknown to the laws:
And this shall make, in every Christian clime,
The Bell of Atri famous for all time."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, "My son:
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answered short:
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answered madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he looked at her
The less he liked her: and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before

The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

"I have obeyed my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him, 75
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers 80
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday? 85
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again: 90
"Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said, "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you! 95
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell 100
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down 105
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise 110
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
 And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
 He says that he will never see me more."
 Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be, 115
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself.
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
 His mother; therefore thou and I will go
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home; 120
 And I will beg of him to take thee back:
 But if he will not take thee back again,
 Then thou and I will live within one house
 And work for William's child, until he grows
 Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd 125

Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
 The door was off the latch: they peep'd and saw
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks, 130
 Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
 And babbled for the golden seal that hung
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
 Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
 His mother, he cried out to come to her: 135
 And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
 "O Father!—if you let me call you so—
 I never came a-begging for myself,
 Or William, or this child; but now I come
 For Dora: take her back; she loves you well. 140
 O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said
 He could not ever rue his marrying me—

I had been a patient wife; but, Sir, he said
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus: 145
 'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
 The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd
 His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight 150
 His father's memory; and take Dora back,
 And let all this be as it was before."

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs: 155
 "I have been to blame—to blame. I have killed
 my son.
 I have killed him—but I loved him—my dear son.
 May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
 Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times. 160
 And all the man was broken with remorse;
 And all his love came back a hundred-fold;
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
 Thinking of William.

So those four abode
 Within one house together: and as years 165
 Went forward, Mary took another mate:
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE

After the death of Bruce, his heart was taken from his body and entrusted to the care of the Earl of Douglas to carry it to the Holy Land, where it was to be buried. Douglas set out accompanied by Sir Simon Lockhart of Lee and a party of knights. On the way Douglas took part in a conflict with the Moors in Spain, and in the effort to save one of his companions, Sir William St. Clair of Roslin, he was killed. The heart of Bruce was brought back to Scotland and buried in Melrose Abbey.

It was upon an April morn,
While yet the frost lay hoar,
We heard Lord James's bugle-horn
Sound by the rocky shore.

Then down we went, a hundred knights,
All in our dark array,
And flung our armour in the ships
That rode within the bay.

We spoke not as the shore grew less,
But gazed in silence back,
Where the long billows swept away
The foam behind our track.

And aye the purple hues decayed
Upon the fading hill,
And but one heart in all that ship
Was tranquil, cold, and still.

The good Lord Douglas paced the deck,
And oh, his face was wan!
Unlike the flush it used to wear
When in the battle-van.—

“Come hither, come hither, my trusty knight,
 Sir Simon of the Lee;
 There is a freit¹ lies near my soul
 I fain would tell to thee.

“Thou know’st the words King Robert spoke²⁵
 Upon his dying day:
 How he bade me take his noble heart
 And carry it far away;

“And lay it in the holy soil
 Where once the Saviour trod, 30
 Since he might not bear the blessed Cross,
 Nor strike one blow for God.

“Last night as in my bed I lay,
 I dream’d a dreary dream:—
 Methought I saw a Pilgrim stand 35
 In the moonlight’s quivering beam.

“His robe was of the azure dye,
 Snow-white his scatter’d hairs,
 And even such a cross he bore
 As good Saint Andrew bears. 40

“‘Why go ye forth, Lord James,’ he said,
 ‘With spear and belted brand?
 Why do you take its dearest pledge
 From this our Scottish land?’

“‘The sultry breeze of Galilee 45
 Creeps through its groves of palm,
 The olives of the Holy Mount
 Stand glittering in the calm.

¹ freit—A premonition, in this case of disaster.

“ ‘But ’tis not there that Scotland’s heart
Shall rest by God’s decree, 50
Till the great angel calls the dead
To rise from earth and sea!

“ ‘Lord James of Douglas, mark my rede,
That heart shall pass once more
In fiery fight against the foe, 55
As it was wont of yore.

“ ‘And it shall pass beneath the Cross,
And save King Robert’s vow;
But other hands shall bear it back,
Not, James of Douglas, thou!’ 60

“ ‘Now, by thy knightly faith, I pray,
Sir Simon of the Lee—
For truer friend had never man
Than thou hast been to me—

“ ‘If ne’er upon the Holy Land 65
’Tis mine in life to tread,
Bear thou to Scotland’s kindly earth
The relics of her dead.’ ”

The tear was in Sir Simon’s eye
As he wrung the warrior’s hand— 70
“ ‘Betide me weal, betide me wo,
I’ll hold by thy command.

“ ‘But if in battle-front, Lord James,
’Tis ours once more to ride,
Nor force of man, nor craft of fiend, 75
Shall cleave me from thy side!’ ”

And aye we sailed and aye we sailed,
Across the weary sea,
Until one morn the coast of Spain
Rose grimly on our lee.

80

And as we rounded to the port,
Beneath the watch-tower's wall,
We heard the clash of the atabals,
And the trumpet's wavering call.

"Why sounds yon Eastern music here
So wantonly and long,
And whose the crowd of armed men
That round yon standard throng?"

85

"The Moors have come from Africa
To spoil and waste and slay,
And King Alonzo of Castile
Must fight with them to-day."

90

"Now shame it were," cried good Lord James,
"Shall never be said of me,
That I and mine have turned aside
From the Cross in jeopardy!"

95

"Have down, have down, my merry men all—
Have down unto the plain;
We'll let the Scottish lion loose
Within the fields of Spain!"

100

"Now welcome to me, noble lord,
Thou and thy stalwart power;
Dear is the sight of a Christian knight,
Who comes in such an hour!"

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE

21

“Is it for bond or faith you come,
Or yet for golden fee?
Or bring ye France’s lilies here,
Or the flower of Burgundie?” 105

“God greet thee well, thou valiant king,
Thee and thy belted peers— 110
Sir James of Douglas am I called,
And these are Scottish spears.

“We do not fight for bond or plight,
Nor yet for golden fee;
But for the sake of our blessed Lord, 115
Who d’ed upon the tree.

“We bring our great king Robert’s heart
Across the weltering wave,
To lay it in the holy soil
Hard by the Saviour’s grave. 120

“True pilgrims we, by land or sea,
Where danger bars the way;
And therefore are we here, Lord King,
To ride with thee this day!”

The King has bent his stately head, 125
And the tears were in his eyne—
“God’s blessing on thee, noble knight,
For this brave thought of thine!

“I know thy name full well, Lord James;
And honoured may I be, 130
That those who fought beside the Bruce
Should fight this day for me!

“Take thou the leading of the van,
And charge the Moors amain;
There is not such a lance as thine
In all the host of Spain!” 125

Then Douglas turned towards us then,
Oh but his glance was high!—
“There is not one of all my men
But is as bold as I. 130

“There is not one of all my knights
But bears as true a spear—
Then onwards, Scottish gentlemen,
And think King Robert’s here!”

The trumpets blew, the cross-bolts flew, 135
The arrows flashed like flame,
As spur in side, and spear in rest,
Against the foe we came.

And many a bearded Saracen
Went down, both horse and man; 140
For through their ranks we rode like corn,
So furiously we ran!

But in behind our path they closed,
Though fain to let us through,
For they were forty thousand men, 145
And we were wondrous few.

We might not see a lance’s length,
So dense was their array,
But the long fell sweep of the Scottish blade
Still held them hard at bay. 150

"Make in! make in!" Lord Douglas cried—
"Make in, my brethren dear!
Sir William of Saint Clair is down;
We may not leave him here!"

But thicker, thicker grew the swarm, 165
And sharper shot the rain,
And the horses reared amid the press,
But they would not charge again.

"Now Jesu help thee," said Lord James,
"Thou kind and true St. Clair!
An' if I may not bring thee off,
I'll die beside thee there!" 170

Then in his stirrups up he stood,
So lionlike and bold,
And held the precious heart aloft 175
All in its case of gold.

He flung it from him, far ahead,
And never spake he more,
But—"Pass thee first, thou dauntless heart,
As thou wert wont of yore!" 180

The roar of fight rose fiercer yet,
And heavier still the stour,
Till the spears of Spain came shivering in,
And swept away the Moor.

"Now praised be God, the day is won! 185
They fly o'er flood and fell—
Why dost thou draw the rein so hard,
Good knight 'hat fought so well?"

"Oh, ride ye on, Lord King!" he said,
"And leave the dead to me,
For I must keep the dreariest watch
That ever I shall dree!

180

"There lies, above his master's heart,
The Douglas, stark and grim;
And wo is me I should be here,
Not side by side with him!

186

"The world grows cold, my arm is old,
And thin my lyart¹ hair,
And all that I loved best on earth
Is stretched before me there.

200

"O Bothwell banks! that bloom so bright
Beneath the sun of May,
The heaviest cloud that ever blew
Is bound for you this day.

"And Scotland! thou may'st veil thy head ²⁰⁵
In sorrow and in pain:
The sorest stroke upon thy brow
Hath fallen this day in Spain!

"We'll bear them back unto our ship,
We'll bear them o'er the sea,
And lay them in the hallowed earth,
Within our own countrie.

210

¹ lyart—Streaked with gray.

“And be thou strong of heart, Lord King,
For this I tell thee sure,
The sod that drank the Douglas’ blood 218
Shall never bear the Moor!”

The King he lighted from his horse,
He flung his brand away,
And took the Douglas by the hand,
So stately as he lay. 220

“God give thee rest, thou valiant soul!
That fought so well for Spain;
I’d rather half my land were gone,
So thou wert here again!”

We bore the good Lord James away, 228
And the priceless heart we bore,
And heavily we steered our ship
Towards the Scottish shore.

No welcome greeted our return,
Nor clang of martial tread, 230
But all were dumb and hushed as death
Before the mighty dead.

We laid our chief in Douglas Kirk,
The heart in fair Melrose;
And woful men were we that day— 238
God grant their souls repose!

WILLIAM EDMONSTOUNE AYTOUN.

THE BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

This selection is taken from the sixth canto of *The Lady of the Lake*. The Earls of Moray and Mar had been sent against the stronghold of Roderick, chief of Clan Alpine, and were surprised and attacked by the Highlanders in a narrow gorge. In the meantime Roderick had been severely wounded and captured by King James, who, in the guise of James Fitz-James had penetrated the mountain fastness of the outlaw chief. The battle takes place as described in the text. Just as the combatants are about to engage again in the struggle a messenger from the king arrives who commands that the battle should cease, and announces the capture of Roderick. The selection is the story of the battle sung to Roderick by the aged minstrel who had sought his master in prison.

"The Minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
 For ere he parted he would say
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—
 There is no breeze upon the fern,
 No ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyry nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still,
 So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound
 That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams?—

I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star, 23
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero boune¹ for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life, 30
One glance at their array!

"Their light-armed archers far and near
Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frowned, 35
Their barded horsemen in the rear
The stern battalia crowned.
No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang, 40
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road. 45
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave, 50
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws; 55
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

¹ boune—Ready.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends from heaven that fell
 Had pealed the banner-ery of hell!
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
 The archery appear:
 For life! for life! their flight they ply¹—
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
 And plaids and bonnets waving high,
 And broadswords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in the rear.
 Onward they drive in dreadful race,
 Pursuers and pursued;
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood?—
 'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
 Bear back both friend and foe!'—
 Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levelled low;
 And closely shouldering side to side,
 The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
 'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
 As their Tinchel² cows the game!
 They come as fleet as forest deer,
 We'll drive them back as tame.'

"Bearing before them in their course
 The relics of the archer force,
 Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
 Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.

¹ **flight they ply**—Did their best to get out of the difficulty.

² **Tinchel**—A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the Tinchel.

Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,

Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.

I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang!

But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,—

'My banner-man, advance!
I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.

Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!'—

The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;

Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome¹ room.

Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—

Where, where was Roderick then!

One blast upon his bugle-horn

Were worth a thousand men.

And reflux through the pass of fear

The battle's tide was poured;

Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,

Vanished the mountain-sword.

As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,

Receives her roaring linn,

As the dark caverns of the deep

Suck the wild whirlpool in,

So did the deep and darksome pass

Devour the battle's mingled mass;

None linger now upon the plain,

Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

¹ lightsome—In a light-hearted, easy manner.

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
 That deep and doubling pass within.—
 Minstrel, away! the work of fate
 Is bearing on; its issue wait, 130
 Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
 Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
 Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
 Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast. 135
 The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
 The lowering scowl of heaven
 An inky hue of livid blue
 To the deep lake has given;
 Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
 Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again. 140
 I heeded not the eddying surge,
 Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
 Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
 Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
 And spoke the stern and desperate strife 145
 That parts not but with parting life,
 Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
 The dirge of many a passing soul.
 Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
 The martial flood disgorged again, 150
 But not in mingled tide;
 The plaided warriors o' the North
 High on the mountain thunder forth
 And overhang its side,
 While by the lake below appears 155
 The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
 At weary bay each shattered band,
 Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
 Their banners stream like tattered sail,
 That flings its fragments to the gale, 160
 And broken arms and disarray
 Marked the fell havoc of the day.

“Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance, 165
And cried: ‘Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand:
’Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;— 170
My purse, with bonnet-pieces¹ store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o’er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we’ll tame the war-wol then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.’ 175
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed,—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue 180
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
’Twas then, as by the outery riven, 185
Poured down at once the lowering heaven.
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine’s breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman’s eye; 190
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain.—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop’s bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came, 195
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;

¹ *bonnet-pieces*—A gold coin of James V of Scotland.

I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,¹
 Behind an oak I saw her stand,
 A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—
 It darkened,—but amid the moan 200
 Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
 Another flash!—the spearman floats
 A weltering corse beside the boats,
 And the stern matron o'er him stood,
 Her hand and dagger streaming blood. 205

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

KING ROBERT OP SICILY

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
 And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,²
 Apparelled in magnificent attire,
 With retinue of many a knight and squire,
 On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat 5
 And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.³
 And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
 Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
 He caught the words, "*Deposuit potentes*
De sede, et exaltavit humiles;" 10
 And slowly lifting up his kingly head
 He to a learned clerk beside him said,
 "What mean these words?" The clerk made an-
 swer meet,
 "He has put down the mighty from their seat,
 And has exalted them of low degree." 15

¹ **Duncraggan's widowed dame**—In Canto III., the lady of Duncraggan is mourning with her son the death of her husband when the bearer of the Fiery Cross arrives. She urges her son to proceed with the Cross, encourages the warriors, and with the other women and the children seeks shelter at the Island in Loch Katrine.

² **Allemaine**—Germany.

³ **Magnificat**—The song of rejoicing sung by the Virgin Mary when receiving Elizabeth. Luke I, 46-55.

Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
" 'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!" 20
And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint, 25
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked, 30
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sound reëchoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.

At length the sexton, hearing from without 35
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"
Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
"Open: 'tis I, the King! Art thou afraid?" 40
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!"
Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride, 45
Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine, 50
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage 55
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed, 60
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height, 65
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognise. 70

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his look of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou
here?" 75

To which King Robert answered with a sneer,
"I am the King, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"
And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords; 80
The angel answered, with unruffled brow,
"Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou

Henceforth shall wear the bells and scalloped cape,
 And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;
 Thou shalt obey my servants when they call, 85
 And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
 They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
 A group of tittering pages ran before,
 And as they opened wide the folding-door, 90
 His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
 The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
 And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
 With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam, 95
 He said within himself, "It was a dream!"
 But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
 There were the cap and bells beside his bed,
 Around him rose the bare, discoloured walls,
 Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls, 100
 And in the corner, a revolting shape,
 Shivering and chattering saw a wretched ape.
 It was no dream; the world he loved so much
 Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again 105
 To Sicily the old Saturnian¹ reign;
 Under the Angel's governance benign
 The happy island danced with corn and wine,
 And deep within the mountain's burning breast
 Enceladus,² the giant, was at rest. 110

¹ **Saturnian reign**—The golden age when Saturn, who was dethroned by his son Jupiter, presided over the gods and ruled the earth.

² **Enceladus**—The most powerful of the giants who conspired against Jupiter. After the conflict he was imprisoned within Mount Etna. It was fabled that the flames of Etna proceeded from his breath and that the earth motions were caused by the giant turning to ease his weariness.

Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
 Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
 Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,
 With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
 Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn, 115
 By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn.
 His only friend the ape, his only food
 What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
 And when the Angel met him on his way,
 And half in earnest, half in jest, would say, 120
 Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel
 The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
 "Art thou the King?" the passion of his woe
 Burst from him in resistless overflow,
 And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling 125
 The haughty answer back, "I am, I am the King!"

Almost three years were ended; when there came
 Ambassadors of great repute and name
 From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
 Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane 130
 By letter summoned them forthwith to come
 On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
 The Angel with great joy received his guests,
 And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
 And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined, 135
 And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
 Then he departed with them o'er the sea
 Into the lovely land of Italy,
 Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
 By the mere passing of that cavalcade, 140
 With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the
 stir
 Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.
 And lo! among the menials, in mock state,
 Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,

His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went. 145

The Pope received them with great pomp and blare
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square, 150
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd, 155
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
"I am the King! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise. 160
Do you not know me? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?"
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;
The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport 165
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!"
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky; 170 •
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervour filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw, 175
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendour saw,

He felt within a power unfelt before,
 And, kneeling humbly on his chamber-floor,
 He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
 Sweep through the silent air, ascending heaven-
 ward. 180

And now the visit ending, and once more
 Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
 Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
 The land was made resplendent with his train,
 Flashing along the towns of Italy 185
 Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea.
 And when once more within Palermo's wall,
 And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
 He heard the Angelus¹ from convent towers,
 As if the better world conversed with ours, 190
 He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
 And with a gesture bade the rest retire;
 And when they were alone, the Angel said,
 "Art thou the King?" Then, bowing down his head,
 King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast, 195
 And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best!
 My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
 And in some cloister's school of penitence,
 Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,
 Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!" 200

The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
 • A holy light illumined all the place,
 And through the open window, loud and clear,
 They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
 Above the stir and tumult of the street: 205

¹ the *Angelus*—The *Angelus Domini* or hymn to the Virgin Mary. The prayer is recited three times a day at the sound of a bell, which is therefore called the Angelus Bell.

“He has put down the mighty from their seat,
 And has exalted them of low degree!”
 And through the chant a second melody
 Rose like the throbbing of a single string:
 “I am an Angel, and thou art the King!”

210

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
 Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
 But all appavelled as in days of old,
 With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
 And when his courtiers came, they found him there²¹³
 Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

MICHAEL

“I have attempted to give a picture of a man of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart, parental affection and the love of property, *landed property*, including the feelings of inheritance, home and personal and family independence.”—*Wordsworth*.

If from the public way you turn your steps
 Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
 You will suppose that with an upright path
 Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
 The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5
 But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
 The mountains have all opened out themselves,
 And made a hidden valley of their own.
 No habitation can be seen; but they
 Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kives
 That overhead are sailing in the sky.
 It is in truth an utter solitude;

Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
 But for one object which you might pass by,
 Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
 Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
 And to that simple object appertains
 A story—unenriched with strange events,
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me
 Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
 Whom I already loved; not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
 Where was their occupation and abode.
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel
 For passions that were not my own, and think
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.
 Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same
 For the delight of a few natural hearts;
 And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.
 Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name,
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, he heard the South

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!" 66
And, true! /, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights. 69
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed 72
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory 75
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him 78
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years. 80
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work. 83
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them

When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale,
 For endless industry. When day was gone,
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then,
 Their labour did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.
 Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
 That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had performed
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
 And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,

Father and Son, while far into the night 125
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life 130
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
 High into Easedale, up to Dummail-Raise,
 And westward to the village near the lake; 135
 And from this constant light, so regular
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.
 Thus living on through such a length of years, 140
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
 Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
 This son of his old age was yet more dear—
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all— 145
 Than that a child, more than all other gifts
 That earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use 155
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
 And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,

To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
 Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
 Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his door
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

168

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And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
 Two steady roses that were five years old;
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in all
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
 And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
 He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
 And, to his office prematurely called,
 There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a help;
 And for this cause not always, I believe,
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
 Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
 Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

182

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But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
 Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
 He with his Father daily went, and they
 Were as companions, why should I relate

194

That objects which the Shepherd loved before
 Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came 200
 Feelings and emanations—things which were
 Light to the sun and music to the wind;
 And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up:
 And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year, 205
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
 In surety for his brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means;
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim
 At the first hearing, for a moment took
 More hope out of his life than he supposed
 That any old man ever could have lost. 220
 As soon as he had armed himself with strength
 To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought again, 225
 And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 "I have been toiling more than seventy years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours 230
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
 And I have lived to be a fool at last 235

To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

240

When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"

245

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At this the old man paused,²⁵⁵

And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman,¹ thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with his basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,

260

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¹ Richard Bateman—"The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel."—*Wordsworth*.

And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 370
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me. 375
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 380
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long 385
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights 390
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go: 395
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 400
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared 405

As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,
 With kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
 Nor was there at that time on English land
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
 And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
 And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
 First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue

Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds 245
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed 250
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou 255
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak. 260
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still 265
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould. 270
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more 275
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure

Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."

380

At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Poy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate

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Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.

—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy 425
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him until he was out of sight. 430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen." 435

Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour 440
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame 445
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'T will make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart: 450
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was

Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks 465
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time 480
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went, 485
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at his death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand. 475
The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains 480
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS

A LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR AND POLLUX
ON THE IDES OF QUINTILIS, IN THE YEAR OF THE
CITY CCCCLI.

"The popular belief at Rome, from an early period, seems to have been that the event of the great day of Regillus was decided by supernatural agency. Castor and Pollux, it was said, had fought, armed and mounted, at the head of the legions of the commonwealth, and had afterwards carried the news of the victory with incredible speed to the city. The well in the Forum at which they had alighted was pointed out. Near the well rose their ancient temple. A great festival was kept to their honour on the ides of Quintilis, supposed to be the anniversary of the battle; and on that day sumptuous sacrifices were offered to them at the public charge. One spot on the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers.

"It was ordained that a grand muster and inspection of the equestrian body should be part of the ceremonial performed on the anniversary of the battle in honour of the two equestrian gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, were to meet at a Temple of Mars in the suburbs. Thence they were to ride in state to the Forum, where the Temple of the Twins stood. This pageant was, during several centuries, considered as one of the most splendid sights of Rome. The cavalcade sometimes consisted of five thousand horsemen, all persons of fair repute and easy fortune."—*Macaulay*.

The events here narrated mark the last attempt of Tarquin to regain the throne of Rome. After the failure of the expedition under Lars Porsena, he sought the aid of his son-in-law Mamilius, who roused the Latin Cities in his favour. The confederate forces marched against Rome, but were defeated at Lake Regillus.

Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note! Ho, lictors,¹ clear
the way!

The Knights will ride in all their pride along the streets
to-day.

To-day the doors and windows are hung with garlands
all,

¹ lictors—The attendants of the Consuls.

From Castor in the Forum to Mars¹ without the wall.
 Each Knight is robed in purple, with olive each is
 crowned;
 A gallant war-horse under each paws haughtily the
 ground.
 While flows the Yellow River,² while stands the Sacred³
 Hill,
 The proud Ides of Quintilis⁴ shall have such honour still.
 Gay are the Martian Kalends.⁵ December's Nones⁶
 are gay:
 But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides, shall
 be Rome's whitest day. 10

Unto the Great Twin Brethren⁷ we keep this solemn
 feast.
 Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren came spurring
 from the east.
 They came o'er wild Parthenius,⁸ tossing in waves
 of pine,

¹ **Castor—Mars**—From the Temple of Castor in the Forum to the Temple of Mars, outside the walls of the city.

² **Yellow River**—The Tiber.

³ **Sacred Hill**—The Mons Sacer, a short distance from Rome, to which the Plebs retired when they abandoned the city during their quarrel with the Patricians.

⁴ **Ides of Quintilis**—Fifteenth of July.

⁵ **Martian Kalends**—First of March.

⁶ **December's Nones**—Fifth of December.

⁷ **Twin Brethren**—Castor and Pollux, the twin children of Jupiter and Leda. They took part in the Argonautic expedition under Jason. Their worship was common both in Greece and Rome.

⁸ **Parthenius**—"These lines describe the course of the mysterious riders from their Eastern birthplace. The Parthenian range is the eastern barrier of the Arkadian or central highlands of the Peloponnese. Cirrha was the port on the Corinthian Gulf for the landing of pilgrims for the great shrine of Delphi. Adria or Hadria was the name by which the Romans spoke of the Adriatic Sea; and the Apennines formed the backbone of Italy, which the twin riders had to cross before they could reach Rome."—Cox.

O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam, o'er purple
Apennine,

From where with flutes and dances their ancient
mansion rings, 15

In lordly Lacedæmon, the City of two kings,
To where, by Lake Regillus, under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum, was fought the glorious
fight.

Now on the place of slaughter are cots and sheepfolds
seen,

And rows of vines, and fields of wheat, and apple-
orchards green; 20

The swine crush the big acorns that fall from Corne's
oaks.

Upon the turf by the Fair Fount the reaper's pottage
smokes.

The fisher baits his angle; the hunter twangs his bow;
Little they think on those strong limbs that moulder
deep below.

Little they think how sternly that day the trumpets
pealed; 25

How in the slippery swamp of blood warrior and war-
horse reeled;

How wolves came with fierce gallop, and crows on
eager wings,

To tear the flesh of captains, and peck the eyes of
kings;

How thick the dead lay scattered under the Porcian
height;

How through the gates of Tusculum raved the wild
stream of flight; 30

And how the Lake Regillus bubbled with crimson foam,
What time the Thirty Cities came forth to war with
Rome.

But, Roman, when thou standest upon that holy
ground,
Look thou with heed on the dark rock that girds the
dark lake round,
So shalt thou see a hoof-mark stamped deep into
the flint:
It was no hoof of mortal steed that made so strange
a dint:
There to the Great Twin Brethren vow thou thy vows,
and pray
That they, in tempest and in flight, will keep thy head
always.

Since last the Great Twin Brethren of mortal eyes
were seen,
Have years gone by an hundred and fourscore and
thirteen. 40

That summer a Virginius was Consul first in place;
The second was stout Aulus, of the Posthumian race.
The Herald of the Latines from Gabii came in state:
The Herald of the Latines passed through Rome's
Eastern Gate.

The Herald of the Latines did in our Forum stand; ⁴⁵
And there he did his office, a sceptre in his hand.

"Hear, Senators and people of the good town of Rome,
The Thirty Cities charge you to bring the Tarquins
home;
And if ye still be stubborn, to work the Tarquins wrong,
The Thirty Cities warn you, look that your walls
be strong." 50

Then spake the Consul Aulus, he spake a bitter jest:
"Once the jays sent a message unto the eagle's nest:
Now yield thou up thine eyrie unto the carrion-kite,
Or come forth valiantly, and face the jays in mortal
fight.

Forth looked in wrath the eagle; and carrion-kite
and jay,
Soon as they saw his beak and claw, fled screaming
far away."

The Herald of the Latines hath hied him back in state;
The Fathers of the City are met in high debate.
Thus spake the elder Consul, an ancient man and wise:
"Now hearken, Conscript Fathers, to that which I
advise.

In seasons of great peril 'tis good that one bear sway;
Then choose we a Dictator, whom all men shall obey.
Camerium knows how deeply the sword of Aulus bites,
And all our city calls him the man of seventy fights.
Then let him be Dictator for six months and no more,⁶⁶
And have a Master of the Knights and axes twenty-
four."¹

So Aulus was Dictator, the man of seventy fights;
He made Æbutius Elva his Master of the Knights.
On the third morn thereafter, at dawning of the day,
Did Aulus and Æbutius set forth with their array.⁷⁰
Sempronius Atratinus was left in charge at home
With boys, and with gray-headed men, to keep the
walls of Rome.

Hard by the Lake Regillus our camp was pitched at
night;
Eastward a mile the Latines lay, under the Porcian
height.
Far over hill and valley their mighty host was spread;⁷⁵
And with their thousand watch-fires the midnight sky
was red.

¹ **twenty-four**—The lictors, of whom twelve attended each Consul, each carried an axe and a bundle of rods, as a symbol of the authority of the Consul

Up rose the golden morning over the Porcian height,
The proud Ides of Quintilis marked evermore with
white.

Not without secret trouble our bravest saw the foes;
For girt by threescore thousand spears, the thirty
standards rose. 80

From every warlike city that boasts the Latian name,
Foredoomed to dogs and vultures, that gallant army
came;

From Setia's purple vineyards, from Alba's ancient
wall,

From the white streets of Tusculum, the crown
of all,

From where the Witch's¹ Fortress o'erhangs the dark-
blue seas; 85

From the still, glassy lake that sleeps beneath Aricia's
trees,²—

Those trees in whose dim shadow the ghastly priest
doth reign,

The priest who slew the slayer, and shall himself be
slain;

From the drear banks of Ufens, where flights of marsh-
fowl play,

And buffaloes lie wallowing through the hot summer's
day; 90

From the gigantic watch-towers, no work of earthly
men,

Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook the never-ending fen;

From the Laurentian jungle, the wild hog's reedy home;

From the green steeps whence Anio leaps in floods of
snow-white foam.

¹ **Witch's Fortress**—Circeii, so called as the supposed home of the enchantress, Circe.

² **Aricia's trees**—The temple of Diana at Aricia, on the Appian Way, was the scene of human sacrifices. The priest of the temple who was usually a runaway slave, held his office by virtue of having conquered the previous occupant in single combat. He held his office until he himself met a similar fate.

Aricia, Cora, Norba, Velitræ, with the might
 Of Setia and of Tusculum, were marshalled on the right.
 The leader was Mamilius, prince of the Latian name;
 Upon his head a helmet of red gold shone like flame;
 High on a gallant charger of dark-gray hue he rode;
 Over his gilded armour a vest of purple flowed, 100
 Woven in the land of sunrise by Syria's dark-browed
 daughters,
 And by the sails of Carthage brought far o'er the
 southern waters.

Lavinium and Laurentum had on the left their post,
 With all the banners of the marsh, and banners of the
 coast.

Their leader was false Sextus, that wrought the deed
 of shame: 105

With restless pace and haggard face to his last field
 he came.

Man said he saw strange visions which none beside
 might see,

And that strange sounds were in his ears which
 none might hear but he.

A woman¹ fair and stately, but pale as are the dead,
 Oft through the watches of the night sat spinning 110
 by his bed.

And as she plied the distaff, in a sweet voice and low,
 She sang of great old houses, and fights fought long ago.
 So spun she, and so sang she, until the east was gray,
 Then pointed to her bleeding breast, and shrieked, and
 fled away.

But in the centre thickest were ranged the shields of
 foes, 115
 And from the centre loudest the cry of battle rose.

¹ A woman—Lucretia, whose death had been caused by
 Sextus.

There Tibur marched and Pedum beneath proud
Tarquin's rule,
And Ferentinum of the rock, and Gabii of the pool.
There rode the Volscian succours: there, in a dark,
stern ring,
The Roman exiles gathered close around the ancient
king. 120
Though white as Mount Soracte, when winter nights
are long,
His beard flowed down o'er mail and belt, his heart
and hand were strong;
Under his hoary eyebrows still flashed forth quench-
less rage,
And, if the lance shook in his gripe, 'twas more with
hate than age.
Close at his side was Titus on an Apulian steed, 125
Titus, the youngest Tarquin, too good for such a breed.

Now on each side the leaders gave signal for the charge;
And on each side the footmen strode on with lance and
targe;
And on each side the horsemen struck their spurs deep
in gore,
And front to front the armies met with a mighty roar: 130
And under that great battle the earth with blood was
red;
And, like the Pomptine fog¹ at morn, the dust hung
overhead;
And louder still and louder rose from the darkened field
The braying of the war-horns, the clang of sword and
shield,
The rush of squadrons sweeping like whirlwinds o'er
the plain, 135
The shouting of the slayers, and screeching of the slain.

¹ the Pomptine fog—The fog from the Pomptine marshes
near Rome.

False Sextus rode out foremost; his look was high and bold;

His corselet was of bison's hide, plated with steel and gold.

As glares the famished eagle from the Digentian rock
On a choice lamb that bound: alone before Bandusia's flock,
140

Herminius¹ glared on Sextus, and came with eagle speed,

Herminius on black Auster, brave champion on brave steed;

In his right hand the broadsword that kept the bridge so well,

And on his helm the crown he won when proud Fidenæ fell.

Woe to the maid whose lover shall cross his path to-day!
145

False Sextus saw, and trembled, and turned, and fled away.

As turns, as flies, the woodman in the Calabrian brake,
When through the reeds gleams the round eye of that fell speckled snake;

So turned, so fled, false Sextus, and hid him in the rear,
Behind the dark Lavinian ranks, bristling with crest and spear.
150

But far to north Æbutius, the Master of the Knights,
Gave Tubero of Norba to feed the Porcian kites.

Next under those red horse-hoofs Flaccus of Setia lay;
Better had he been pruning among his elms that day.

Mamilius saw the slaughter, and tossed his golden crest,
155

And towards the Master of the Knights through the thick battle pressed.

¹ **Herminius**—Herminius and Spurius Lartius had assisted Horatius to hold the bridge against the Tuscan armies under Lars Porsena.

Æbutius smote Mamilius so fiercely on the shield
That the great lord of Tusculum well nigh rolled on the
field.

Mamilius smote Æbutius, with a good aim and true,
Just where the neck and shoulder join, and pierced
him through and through; 160

And brave Æbutius Elva fell swooning to the ground,
But a thick wall of bucklers encompassed him around.
His clients from the battle bare him some little space,
And filled a helm from the dark lake, and bathed his
brow and face;

And when at last he opened his swimming eyes to
light, 165

Men say the earliest word he spake was, "Friends,
how goes the fight?"

But meanwhile in the centre great deeds of arms were
wrought;

There Aulus the Dictator and there Valerius fought.
Aulus with his good broadsword a bloody passage
cleared

To where, amidst the thickest foes, he saw the long
white beard. 170

Flat lighted that good broadsword upon proud
Tarquin's head.

He dropped the lance; he dropped the reins; he fell
as fall the dead.

Down Aulus springs to slay him, with eyes like coals
of fire;

But faster Titus hath sprung down, and hath bestrode
his sire.

Latian captains, Roman knights, fast down to earth
they spring, 175

And hand to hand they fight on foot around the ancient
king.

First Titus gave tall Cæso a death wound in the face;
Tall Cæso was the bravest man of the brave Fabian race:

Aulus slew Rex of Gabii, the priest of Juno's shrine:
Valerius smote down Julius, of Rome's great Julian
line; 180

Julius, who left his mansion high on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and woe followed proud
Tarquin still.

Now right across proud Tarquin a corpse was Julius laid;
And Titus groaned with rage and grief, and at Valerius
made.

Valerius struck at Titus, and lopped off half his
crest; 185

But Titus stabbed Valerius a span deep in the breast.
Like a mast snapped by the tempest Valerius reeled
and fell.

Ah! woe is me for the good house that loves the people
well!

Then shouted loud the Latines, and with one rush they
bore

The struggling Romans backward three lances' length
and more; 190

And up they took proud Tarquin, and laid him on a shield,
And four strong yeomen bare him, still senseless, from
the field.

But fiercer grew the fighting around Valerius dead;
For Titus dragged him by the foot, and Aulus by the
head.

"On, Latines, on!" quoth Titus, "see how the rebels
fly!" 195

"Romans, stand firm!" quoth Aulus, "and win this
fight or die!

They must not give Valerius to raven and to kite;
For aye Valerius loathed the wrong, and aye upheld
the right;

And for your wives and babies in the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house that loves
the people well!" 200

Then tenfold round the body the roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest when a strong north-
wind blows.
Now backward, and now forward, rocked furiously the
fray,
Till none could see Valerius, and none wist where he
lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns were heaped there in
a mound, ²⁰⁵
And corpses stiff, and dying men that writhed and
gnawed the ground:
And wounded horses kicking, and snorting purple foam;
Right well did such a couch befit a Consular of Rome.

But north looked the Dictator; north looked he long
and hard;
And spake to Caius Cossus, the Captain of his Guard: ²¹⁰
"Caius, of all the Romans, thou hast the keenest sight;
Say, what through yonder storm of dust comes from
the Latian right?"

Then answered Caius Cossus: "I see an evil sight:
The banner of proud Tusculum comes from the Latian
right;
I see the plumed horsemen; and far before the rest ²¹⁵
I see the dark-gray charger, I see the purple vest;
I see the golden helmet that shines far off like flame;
So ever rides Mamilius, Prince of the Latian name."

"Now hearken, Caius Cossus: spring on thy horse's
back;
Ride as the wolves of Apennine were all upon thy ²²⁰
track;
Haste to our southward battle, and never draw thy rein
Until thou find Herminius, and bid him come amain."

So Aulus spake, and turned him again to that fierce
strife;

And Caius Cossus mounted, and rode for death and life.
Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs the helmets of
the dead, 225

And many a curdling pool of blood splashed him from
heel to head.

So came he far to southward, where fought the Roman
host,

Against the banners of the marsh and banners of the
coast.

Like corn before the sickle the stout Lavinians fell,
Beneath the edge of the true sword that kept the
bridge so well. 230

"Herminius! Aulus greets thee; he bids thee come
with speed,

To help our central battle; for sore is there our need.
There wars the youngest Tarquin, and there the Crest
of Flame,

The Tusculan Mamilius, Prince of the Latian name.
Valerius hath fallen fighting in front of our array, 235
And Aulus of the seventy fields alone upholds the day."

Herminius beat his bosom, but never a word he spake.
He clapped his hand on Auster's mane, he gave the
reins a shake,

Away, away went Auster, like an arrow from the bow;
Black Auster was the fleetest steed from Aufidus to
Po. 240

Right glad were all the Romans who, in that hour of
dread,

Against great odds bare up the war around Valerius dead,
When from the south the cheering rose with a mighty
swell:

"Herminius comes, Herminius, who kept the bridge
so well!"

Mamilius spied Herminius, and dashed across the way.²⁴⁴
"Herminius! I have sought thee through many a
bloody day.

One of us two, Herminius, shall nevermore go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum, and lay thou on for Rome!"

All round them paused the battle, while met in mortal
fray

The Roman and the Tusculan, the horses black and
gray. 250

Herminius smote Mamilius through breastplate and
through breast;

And fast flowed out the purple blood over the purple
vest.

Mamilius smote Herminius through head-piece and
through head;

And side by side those chiefs of pride together fell
down dead.

Down fell they dead together in a great lake of gore;²⁵⁵
And still stood all who saw them fall while men might
count a score.

Fast, fast, with heels wild spurning, the dark-gray
charger fled;

He burst through ranks of fighting men, he sprang o'er
heaps of dead.

His bridle far out-streaming, his flanks all blood and
foam,

He sought the southern mountains, the mountains of
his home. 260

The pass was steep and rugged, the wolves they
howled and whined;

But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass, and he left
the wolves behind.

Through many a startled hamlet thundered his flying
feet;

He rushed through the gate of Tusculum, he rushed
up the long white street;
He rushed by tower and temple, and paused not from
his race 265
Till he stood before his master's door in the stately
market-place.
And straightway round him gathered a pale and
trembling crowd,
And when they knew him, cries of rage brake forth,
and wailing loud:
And women rent their tresses for their great prince's
fall;
And old men girt on their old swords, and went to
man the wall. 270

But, like a graven image, black Auster kept his place,
And ever vistfully he looked into his master's face.
The raven mane that daily, with pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and combed, and twined
in even tresses,
And decked with coloured ribands from her own gay
attire, 275
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse in carnage and
in mire.
Forth with a shout sprang Titus, and seized black
Auster's rein.
Then Aulus sware a fearful oath, and ran at him amain.
"The furies¹ of thy brother with me and mine abide,
If one of your accursed house upon black Auster 280
ride!"
As on an Alpine watch-tower from heaven comes down
the flame,
Full on the neck of Titus the blade of Aulus came;

¹ **furies**—Goddesses who executed the vengeance of the Gods. Sextus is represented as haunted by the Furies as a punishment for his crime.

And out the red blood spouted, in a wide arch and tall,
As spouts a fountain in the court of some rich
Capuan's hall.

The knees of all the Latines were loosened with
dismay

When dead, on dead Herminius, the bravest Tarquin
lay.

And Aulus the Dictator stroked Auster's raven mane,
With heed he looked unto the girths, with heed unto
the rein.

"Now bear me well, black Auster, into yon thick array;
And thou and I will have revenge for thy good lord
this day."

So spake he; and was buckling tighter black Auster's
band,

When he was aware of a princely pair that rode at his
right hand.

So like they were, no mortal might one from other
know;

White as snow their armour was, their steeds were white
as snow.

Never on earthly anvil did such rare armour gleam;
And never did such gallant steeds drink of an earthly
stream.

And all who saw them trembled and pale grew every
cheek;

And Aulus the Dictator scarce gathered voice to speak.

"Say by what name men call you? What city is your
home?"

And wherefore ride ye in such guise before the ranks of
Rome?"

"By many names men call us; in many lands we dwell;
Well Samothracia knows us; Cyrene knows us well.
Our house in gay Tarentum is hung each morn with
flowers;
High o'er the masts of Syracuse our marble portal
towers;
But by the proud Eurotas¹ is our dear native home;³⁰⁸
And for the right we come to fight before the ranks
of Rome."

So answered those strange horsemen, and each couched
low his spear;
And forthwith all the ranks of Rome were bold, and of
good cheer.
And on the thirty armies came wonder and affright,
And Ardea wavered on the left, and Cora on the right.³¹⁰
"Rome to the charge!" cried Aulus; "the foe begins
to yield!
Charge for the hearth of Vesta!² Charge for the Golden
Shield!³
Let no man stop to plunder, but slay, and slay, and
slay;
The gods who live forever are on our side to-day."

Then the fierce trumpet-flourish from earth to heaven
arose. 315
The kites know well the long stern swell that bids the
Romans close.
Then the good sword of Aulus was lifted up to slay;
Then, like a crag down Apennine, rushed Auster
through the fray.

¹ **Eurotas**—Lacedæmon is situated on the Eurotas.

hearth of Vesta—The goddess Vesta was worshipped as the protectress of the home.

³ **Golden Shield**—The famous shield that during the reign of Numa Pompilius dropped from heaven as a sign of divine favour. Upon the safety of this shield was said to depend the safety of Rome. It was carefully guarded by twelve priests.

But under those strange horsemen still thicker lay the slain;

And after those strange horses black Auster toiled in vain. 320

Behind them Rome's long battle came rolling on the foe,
Ensigns dancing wild above, blades all in line below.

So comes the Po in flood-time upon the Celtic plain;
So comes the squall, blacker than night, upon the Adrian main.

Now, by our Sire Quirinus,¹ it was a goodly sight 325

To see the thirty standards swept down the tide of flight.

So flies the spray of Adria when the black squall doth blow,

So corn-sheaves in the flood-time spin down the whirling Po.

False Sextus to the mountains turned first his horse's head;

And fast fled Ferentinum, and fast Lanuvium fled. 330

The horsemen of Nomentum spurred hard out of the fray;

The footmen of Velitræ threw shield and spear away.

And underfoot was trampled, amidst the mud and gore,
The banner of proud Tusculum, that never stooped before.

And down went Flavius Faustus, who led his stately ranks 335

From where the apple-blossoms wave on Anio's echoing banks,

And Tullus of Arpinum, chief of the Volscian aids,

And Metius with the long fair curls, the love of Anxur's maids,

And the white head of Vulso, the great Arician seer,

And Nepos of Laurentum, the hunter of the deer; 340

¹ **Sire Quirinus**—Romulus, the founder of Rome, who was worshipped under the name of Quirinus.

And in the back ~~false~~ ~~Sextus~~ felt the good Roman steel,
And wriggling in the dust he died, like a worm beneath
the wheel.

And fliers and pursuers were mingled in a mass,
And far away the battle went roaring through the pass.

Sempronius Atratinus sate in the Eastern Gate, 345
Beside him were three Fathers, each in his chair of state;
Fabius, whose nine stout grandsons that day were in
the field,

And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve who kept the Golden
Shield;

And Sergius, the High Pontiff,¹ for wisdom far re-
nowned;

In all Etruria's colleges was no such Pontiff found. 350

And all around the portal, and high above the wall,
Stood a great throng of people, but sad and silent all;
Young lads, and stooping elders that might not bear
the mail,

Matrons with lips that quivered, and maids with faces
pale.

Since the first gleam of daylight, Sempronius had not
ceased 355

To listen for the rushing of horse-hoofs from the east.
The mist of eve was rising, the sun was hastening down,
When he was aware of a princely pair fast pricking
towards the town.

So like they were, man never saw twins so like before;
Red with gore their armour was, their steeds were red
with gore. 360

"Hail to the great Asylum! Hail to the hill-tops seven!
Hail to the fire that burns for aye,² and the shield that
fell from heaven!

¹ **High Pontiff**—Pontifex Maximus or chief priest.

² **burns for aye**—The sacred fire on the altar of Vesta.

This day, by Lake Regillus, under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum was fought a glorious fight;
To-morrow your Dictator shall bring in triumph home³⁷⁵
The spoils of thirty cities to deck the shrines of Rome!"

Then burst from that great concourse a shout that shook
the towers,
And some ran north, and some ran south, crying, "'The
day is ours!'"
But on rode these strange horsemen, with slow and
lordly pace;
And none who saw their bearing durst ask their name or
race. 370
On rode they to the Forum, while laurel-boughs and
flowers,
From house-tops and from windows, fell on their crests
in showers.
When they drew nigh to Vesta, they vaulted down
amain,
And washed their horses in the well that springs by
Vesta's fane.
And straight again they mounted, and rode to Vesta's
door; 375
Then, like a blast, away they passed, and no man saw
them more.

And all the people trembled, and pale grew every cheek;
And Sergius the High Pontiff alone found voice to
speak:
"The gods who live forever have fought for Rome
to-day!
These be the Great Twin Brethren to whom the
Dorians pray. 380
Back comes the Chief in triumph who, in the hour of
fight,

Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren in harness on his
right.
Safe comes the ship to haven, through billows and
through gales,
If once the Great Twin Brethren sit shining on the sails.
Wherefore they washed their horses in Vesta's holy
well,
Wherefore they rode to Vesta's door, I know, but may
not tell.
Here, hard by Vesta's Temple, build we a stately dome
Unto the Great Twin Brethren who fought so well for
Rome.
And when the months returning bring back this day of
fight,
The proud Ides of Quintilis, marked evermore with
white,
Unto the Great Twin Brethren let all the people throng,
With chaplets and with offerings, with music and with
song;
And let the doors and windows be hung with garlands
all,
And let the Knights be summoned to Mars without the
wall.
Thence let them ride in purple with joyous trumpet-
sound,
Each mounted on his war-horse, and each with olive
crowned;
And pass in solemn order before the sacred dome,¹
Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren who fought so
well for Rome!"

THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY.

¹ sacred dome—A portion of this magnificent temple is still standing

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT
MARINER

PART I

An ancient
Mariner
meeteih three
~~galleons bid-~~
den to a wed-
ding-feast,
and detaineth
one.

It is an ancient¹ Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering
eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened 5
wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand;
"There was a ship," quoth he. 10
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons² his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child: 15
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the
eye of the old
seafaring man,
and con-
strained to
hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner:— 20

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

¹ ancient—Both old in years and living in the olden time.
² Eftsoons—At once.

“The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
 And he **shone** bright, and on the right
 Went down into **the sea**.

25 The Mariner
 tells how the
 ship sailed
 southward
 with a good
 wind and fair
 weather, till it
 reached the
 Line.

“Higher and higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon—”
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

30

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-
 Guest heareth
 the bridal
 music; but
 35 the Mariner
 continueth
 his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

“And now the storm-blast came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong:
 He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
 And chased us south along.

The ship
 drawn by a
 storm toward
 the south pole

“With sloping mast and dipping prow,
 As who pursued with yell and blow
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head,
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
 And southward aye we fled.

50

“And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold:
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

The land of ice " And through the drifts the snowy cliffs 55
 and of fearful Did send a dismal sheen:
 sounds where no living thing
 was to be seen. Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
 The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
 The ice was all around: 60
 It cracked and growled, and roared and
 howled,
 Like noises in a swound!

Till a great " At length did cross an Albatross,
 sea-bird, Thorough the fog it came;
 called the Albatross, As if it had been a Christian soul, 65
 came through the snow-fog,
 and was re- We hailed it in God's name.
 ceived with great joy and
 hospitality.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
 The helmsman steered us through! 70

And lo! the " And a good south wind sprung up be-
 Albatross hind;
 proveth a bird of good omen,
 and followeth The Albatross did follow,
 the ship as it And every day, for food or play,
 returned Came to the mariners' hollo!
 northward through fog
 and floating ice.

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
 It perched for vespers¹ nine;
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
 white,
 Glimmered the white moon-shine."

¹ vespers—Evenings.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
 Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-
 bow
 I shot the Albatross!"

The ancient
 Mariner
 inhospitably
 killeth the
 pious bird of
 good omen.

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
 Out of the sea came he,
 Still hid in mist, and on the left
 Went down into the sea.

85

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
 But no sweet bird did follow,
 Nor any day for food or play
 Came to the mariners' hollo!

90

"And I had done a hellish thing,
 And it would work 'em woe:
 For all averred, I had killed the bird
 That made the breeze to blow.
 Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
 That made the breeze to blow!

His shipmates
 cry out against
 the ancient
 Mariner, for
 killing the bird
 of good luck.

95

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,¹
 The glorious Sun uprist:
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird
 That brought the fog and mist.
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
 That bring the fog and mist.

But when t'
 fog cleared off,
 they justify
 the same, and
 thus make
 themselves ac-
 complices in
 the crime.

100

¹ God's own head—These words are attached to "Sun" in the next line.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line. "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea. 105

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed. "Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt
down,

'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea! 110

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean. 115

And the Albattross begins to be avenged. "Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. 120

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea. 125

"About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires¹ danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white. 130

¹ death-fires—Phosphorescent lights.

"And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantino-politan, Michael Paellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

"And every tongue, through utter ¹³⁵
drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates ¹⁴⁰ in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time! ¹⁴⁵
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner be-holdeth a sign in the element afar off

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist; ¹⁵⁰
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.¹

¹ I wist—A.S. *gewiss*, certainly.

"A speck, a mist, a shape I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

155

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him
to be a ship;
and at a dear
ransom he
freeth his
speech from
the bonds of
thirst.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

160

"With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy!¹ they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

165

A flash of
joy:

And horror
follows. For
can it be a *skip*
that comes
onward with-
out wind or
tide?

"See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal,—
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

170

"The western wave was all aflame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove sud- 175
denly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

¹ **Gramercy**—Originally "great thanks," from the French *grand merci*; here the word merely denotes surprise.

"And straight the Sun was flecked with
bars,
(Heaven's Mother¹ send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face. 180

It seemeth
him but the
skeleton of a
ship.

"Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat
loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

"Are those her ribs through which the
Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate? 185

And its ribs are
seen as bars on
the face of the
setting Sun.
The Spectre-
Woman and
her Death-
mate, and no
other on board
the skeleton-
ship.

"Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare, Life-in-Death, was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Like vessel,
like crew!

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!' 195
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and
Life-in-Death
have diced for
the ship's
crew, and she
(the latter)
winneth the
ancient
Mariner.

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark. 200

No twilight
within the
courts of the
Sun.

¹ Heaven's Mother—The Virgin Mary.

At the rising
of the Moon,

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup.
My life-blood seemed to sip! 205
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star 210
Within the nether tip.

One after
another,

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye. 215

His shipmates
drop down
dead.

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on
the ancient
Mariner.

"The souls did from their bodies fly,— 220
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART IV

The Wedding-
Guest feareth
that a Spirit is
talking to him.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand! 225
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-

Guest!

This body dropt not down.

230 But the an-
cient Mariner
assureth him
of his bodily
life, and pro-
ceedeth to re-
late his horri-
ble penance.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

235

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

He despiseth
the creatures
of the calm.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

240 And envieth
that they
should live,
and so many
lie dead.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

245

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and
the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

250

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

255 But the curse
liveth for him
in the eye of
the dead men.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye! 290
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up, 295
And a star or two beside—

"Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away 270
A still and awful red.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light 275
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track 280
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware; 285
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

He bleaseth them in his heart.

“The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.”

The spell be-
gins to break

PART V

“Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen¹ the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

296

“The silly² buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

By grace of
the Holy
Mother, the
ancient Mari-
ner is re-
freshed with
rain.

“My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

“I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

305

“And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth
sounds and
seeth strange
sights and
commotions in
the sky and
the elements

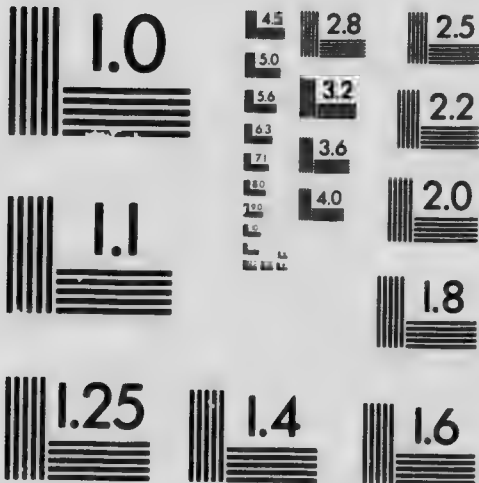
¹ Mary Queen—The Virgin Mary

² silly—Useless



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"The upper air burst into life!
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
 To and fro they were hurried about! 315
 And to and fro, and in and out,
 The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge;
 And the rain poured down from one 320
 black cloud;
 The moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The moon was at its side:
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 The lightning fell with never a jag, 325
 A river steep and wide.

The bodies of
 the ship's crew
 are inspired,
 and the ship
 moves on.

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on!
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 The dead men gave a groan. 330

"They groaned, they stirred, they all
 uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
 It had been strange, even in a dream.
 To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved 335
 on;
 Yet never a breeze up blew;
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
 We were a ghastly crew. 340

“The body of my brother’s son
 Stood by me, knee to knee:
 The body and I pulled at one rope,
 But he said nought to me.”

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner!”
 “Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!”
 ’Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corse came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest:

345 But not by the
 souls of the
 men, nor by
 demons of
 earth or mid-
 dle air, but by
 a blessed troop
 of angelic spir-
 its, sent down
 by the invoca-
 tion of the
 guardian
 saint.

“For when it dawned—they dropped their
 arms,
 And clustered round the mast;
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
 mouths,
 And from their bodies passed.

350

“Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the Sun;
 Slowly the sounds came back again,
 Now mixed, now one by one.

355

“Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the skylark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are,
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air
 With their sweet jargoning!

360

“And now ’twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute;
 And now it is an angel’s song,
 That makes the heavens be mute.

365

“It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

870

“Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

875

The lonesome
Spirit from the
south-pole car-
ries on the
ship as far as
the Line, in
obedience to
the angelic
troop, but still
requireth ven-
geance.

“Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The Spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

880

“The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

885

“Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

890

The Polar
Spirit's fellow
demons, the
invisible in-
habitants of
the element,
take part in
his wrong;
and two of
them relate
one to the

“How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

895

370 "“Is it he?’ quoth one, ‘Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid ~~the~~ now
The harmless Albatross.

other, that
penance long
and heavy for
the ancient
400 Mariner hath
been accorded
to the Polar
Spirit, who
returneth
southward.

375 "“The Spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.’ 405

380 "“The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, ‘The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.’ ”

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

385 "“But tell me, tell me! speak again, 410
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?’

SECOND VOICE

390 "“Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast; 415
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

395 "“If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously 420
She looketh down on him.’

FIRST VOICE

The Mariner
hath been cast
into a trance;
for the angelic
power causeth
the vessel to
drive north-
ward faster
than human
life could
endure.

““But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?”

SECOND VOICE

““The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.”

425

““Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner’s trance is abated.”

The supernat-
ural motion
is retarded;
the Mariner
awakes, and
his penance
begins anew.

“I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
’Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

430

“All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

435

“The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

440

The curse is
finally ex-
piated.

“And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

445

“Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

“But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

“It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming. 460

“Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew. 465

“Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree? 470

And the an-
cient Mariner
beholdeth his
native coun-
try.

“We drifted o’er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway. 475

“The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon. 480

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic
spirits leave
the dead
bodies.

"And the bay was white with silent light 480
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

"A little distance from the prow 485
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!¹
And appear in A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
their own forms of light. On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light; 495

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

¹ holy rood—The holy cross.

"The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast: 505
 Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third—I heard his voice:
 It is the Hermit good!
 He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
 That he makes in the wood.
 He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

"This Hermit good lives in that wood 515
 Which slopes down to the sea. The Hermit of
the wood,
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
 He loves to talk with mariners
 That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
 He hath a cushion plump: 520
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
 'Why, this is strange, I trow!'
 Where are those lights so many and fair, 525
 That signal made but now?'

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said— Approacheth
the ship with
wonder.
 'And they answered not our cheer!
 The planks looked warped! and see those
 sails,
 How thin they are and sere! 530
 I never saw aught like to them,
 Unless perchance it were
 ¹ trow—Think.

“Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
 My forest-brook along;
 When the ivy-tod¹ is heavy with snow, 535
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
 That eats the she-wolf's young.’

“Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
 (The Pilot made reply)
 I am a-feared’—‘Push on, push on!’ 540
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

“The boat came closer to the ship,
 But I nor spake nor stirred;
 The boat came close beneath the ship,
 And straight a sound was heard. 545

The ship sud-
 denly sinketh. “Under the water it rumbled on,
 Still louder and more dread:
 It reached the ship, it split the bay;
 The ship went down like lead.

The ancient
 Mariner is
 saved in the
 Pilot's boat. “Stunned by that loud and dreadful
 sound, 550
 Which sky and ocean smote,
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned
 My body lay afloat;
 But swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat. 555

“Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
 The boat spun round and round;
 And all was still, save that the hil.
 Was telling of the sound.

¹ ivy-tod—Ivy-bush.

"I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 540
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go, 545
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The Hermit crossed his brow. 575
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'
The ancient
Mariner ear-
nestly entreat-
eth the Hermit
to shrieve
him; and the
penance of life
falls on him.

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale; 580
And then it left me free.

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. 585
He never and
a through-
ow his future
life an agony
can raineth
to travel
to

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach. 590

“What loud uproar bursts from that door!
 The wedding-guests are there:
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are:
 And hark the little vesper bell,
 Which biddeth me to prayer!

585

“O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide, wide sea:
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemèd there to be.

600

“Oh sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company!—

“To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
 And youths and maidens gay!

605

And to teach
 by his own
 example love
 and reverence
 to all things
 that God made
 and loveth.

“Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
 He prayeth well, who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

610

“He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.”

715

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,
 Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
 Turned from the bridegroom's door.

620

He went like one that hath been stunned,
 And is of sense forlorn:
 A sadder and a wiser man,
 He rose the morrow morn.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

"According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favourite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

"The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the supposed date of King Arthur's reign.
 —Lowell.

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

Over his keys the musing organist,
 Beginning doubtfully and far away,¹
 First lets his fingers wander as they list,
 And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
 Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
 Gives hope and fervour, nearer draws his theme,
 First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
 Along the wavering vista of his dream.

¹ far away—The composition of this poem occupied Lowell less than forty-eight hours. Evidently the poet when he began had not the matter of his poem entirely in his mind, nor the method of treatment.

Not only around our infancy¹
 Doth heaven with all its splendours lie;
 Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
 We Sinais climb² and know it not.

10

Over our manhood bend the skies;
 Against our fallen and traitor lives
 The great winds utter prophecies;
 With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
 Its arms outstretched, the Druid wood
 Waits with its benedicite;
 And to our age's drowsy blood
 Still shouts the inspiring sea.

15

20

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
 The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
 The priest has his fee who comes and shrives us,
 We bargain for the graves we lie in;
 At the Devil's booth are all things sold,
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
 For a cap and bells³ our lives we pay,

25

¹ **our infancy**—Wordsworth in his *Intimations of Immortality* says:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy.

² **We Sinais climb**—Daily we stand face to face with God, as did Moses on Mount Sinai.

³ **cap and bells**—Something utterly foolish.

Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,

'Tis only God may be had for the asking;

No price is set on the lavish summer;

June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?

Then, if ever, come perfect days;

Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays;

Whether we look, or whether we listen,

We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;

Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and towers,

And, groping blindly above it for light,

Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;

The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys;

The cowslip startles in meadows green,

The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,

And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean

To be some happy creature's palace;

The little bird sits at his door in the sun,

Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,

And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives;

His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,

And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;

He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—

In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,

And whatever of life hath ebbed away

Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,

Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;

Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
 We are happy now because God wills it;
 No matter how barren the past may have been,
 'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
 We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
 How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
 We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
 That skies are clear and grass is growing;
 The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
 That dandelions are blossoming near,

65

70

That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
 That the river is bluer than the sky,
 That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
 And if the breeze kept the good news back,
 For other couriers we should not lack;

75

We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
 And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
 Warmed with the new wine of the year,
 Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
 Everything is happy now,

80

Everything is upward striving;
 'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
 As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
 'Tis the natural way of living:

85

Who knows whither the clouds have fled?

In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
 And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,

The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
 The soul partakes the season's youth,

90

And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
 Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,

Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.

What wonder if Sir Launfal now

Remembered the keeping of his vow?

95

PART FIRST

I

65 "My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail;
70 Shall never a bed for me be spread, 100
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
75 Ere day create the world anew." 105
Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II

80 The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drownsd the cattle up to their knees, 110
The little birds sang as if it were
The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:
85 The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray: 115
'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree;
90 Summer besieged it on every side,
But the churlish stone her assaults defied; 120
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
95 Over the hills and out of sight;

Green and broad was every tent,
 And out of each a murmur went
 Till the breeze fell off at night.

128

III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
 And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
 Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
 In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
 It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
 Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
 In his siege of three hundred summers long,
 And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
 Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,
 And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
 Sir Launfal flashed forth in his maiden mail,
 To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

130

135

IV

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
 And morning in the young knight's heart;
 Only the castle moodily
 Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
 And gloomed by itself apart;
 The season brimmed all other things up
 Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

140

145

V

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
 He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
 Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
 And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;

150

The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
 The flesh 'neath his armour 'gan shrink and crawl,
 And midway its leap his heart stood still
 Like a frozen waterfall;
 For this man, so foul and bent of stature, 155
 Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
 And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
 So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
 "Better to me the poor man's crust, 160
 Better the blessing of the poor,
 Though I turn me empty from his door;
 That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
 He gives nothing but worthless gold
 Who gives from a sense of duty; 165
 But he who gives but a slender mite,
 And gives to that which is out of sight,
 That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
 Which runs through all and doth all unite,—
 The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms, 170
 The heart outstretches its eager palms,
 For a god goes with it and makes it store
 To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
 From the snow five thousand summers old; 175
 On open wold and hi'op bleak
 It had gathered all the cold,
 And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
 It carried a shiver everywhere
 From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare; 180

The little brook heard it and built a roof
 'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
 All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
 He groined his arches and matched his beams;
 Slender and clear were his crystal spars 185
 As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
 He sculptured every summer delight
 In his halls and chambers out of sight;
 Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
 Down through a forest-leaved forest-crypt, 190
 Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
 Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
 Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
 But silvery mosses that downward grew;
 Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief 195
 With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf,
 Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
 For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
 He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
 And hung them thickly with diamond-drops, 200
 That crystallised the beams of moon and sun,
 And made a star of every one:
 No mortal builder's most rare device
 Could match this winter-palace of ice;
 'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay 205
 In his depths serene through the summer day,
 Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,
 Lest the happy model should be lost,
 Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
 By the elfin builders of the frost. 210

Within the hall are song and laughter,
 The cheeks of Christmas grow red and jolly,
 And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
 With lightsome green of ivy and holly;
 Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide 215
 Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;

The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
Like herds of startled deer.

220

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,

225

Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was "Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"
The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

230

235

PART SECOND

I

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

240

245

II

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
 For another heir in his earldom sate;
 An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
 He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
 Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
 No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
 But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
 The badge of the suffering and the poor.

260

265

III

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
 Was idle mail 'gainst the barbed air,
 For it was just at the Christmas time;
 So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
 And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
 In the light and 'warmth of long-ago;
 He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
 O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
 Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
 He can count the camels in the sun,
 As over the red-hot sands they pass
 To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
 The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
 And with its own self like an infant played,
 And waved its signal of palms.

260

265

270

IV

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;"—
 The happy camels may reach the spring,
 But Sir Launfal sees only the gruesome thing,
 The leper, lank as the rain-blanch'd bone,
 That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
 And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
 In the desolate horror of his disease.

275

V

And Sir Launfal said, "I behold in thee 290
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns.
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side: 295
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to Thee!"

VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise 290
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he girt his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust;
He parted in twain his single crust, 295
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink:
'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed, 300
And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified, 305

Shining and tall and fair and straight
 As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,¹—
 Himself the Gate whereby men can
 Enter the Temple of God in Man.

VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine, 810
 And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
 That mingle their softness and quiet in one
 With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;
 And the voice that was calmer than silence said, 815
 "Lo, it is I, be not afraid!
 In many climes, without avail,
 Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
 Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou
 Didst fill at the streamlet for Me but now; 820
 This crust is my body broken for thee
 This water His blood that died on the tree;
 The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
 In whatso we share with another's need:
 Not what we give, but what we share,— 825
 For the gift without the giver is bare;
 Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
 Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me."

IX

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swoond:—
 "The Grail in my castle here is found!
 Hang my idle armour up on the wall, 830
 Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
 He must be fenced with stronger mail
 Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

¹ Beautiful Gate—Acts III. 2.

X

The castle gate stands open now,
 And the wanderer is welcome to the hall 336
 As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
 No longer scowl the turrets tall,
 The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
 When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
 She entered with him in disguise, 340
 And mastered the fortress by surprise;
 There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
 She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
 The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land 348
 Has hall and bower at his command;
 And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
 But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A FABLE

This poem, while based to a certain extent on events in the life of Francis Bonnivard, is not to be taken as historically correct. Bonnivard was born in 1496, and was possessed of a large property in the republic of Geneva. When the Duke of Savoy invaded the republic Bonnivard opposed him and so gained his bitter enmity. Shortly afterwards he was captured by the Duke and imprisoned for six years in the Castle of Chillon. He was released in 1536 by his fellow-countrymen. He died in 1571. Byron has woven a web of fanciful narrative around the six years imprisonment of the Genoese patriot. The poem is more an expression of the passion of the poet for liberty than it is the experience of Bonnivard himself.

The Castle of Chillon which stands on a rock a short distance from the shore in Lake Geneva is reached by a bridge. The dungeons are objects of curiosity to large numbers of tourists who visit the place.

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears.
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed:
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;—
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left:

Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp: 25
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away 40
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score 45
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I, living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart; 55
'Twas still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
'To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old, 60
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound—not full and free 65
As they of yore were wont to be;
It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest
 I ought to do—and did my best—
 And each did well in his degree.

70

The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,

75

For him my soul was sorely moved:
 And truly might it be distressed
 To see such bird in such a nest;
 For he was beautiful as day—

80

(When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,

Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun:

85

And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for naught but others' ills,
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorred to view below.

90

V

The other was as pure of mind,
 But formed to combat with his kind;
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
 And perished in the foremost rank

95

With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
 His spirit withered with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline—
 And so perchance in sooth did mine:

100

But yet I forced it on to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,
 Had followed there the deer and wolf;
 To him this dungeon was a gulf,
 And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman¹ lies by Chillon's walls,
 A thousand feet in depth below
 Its massy waters meet and flow;
 Thus much the fathom-line was sent
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
 Which round about the wave inthrals:
 A double dungeon wall and wave
 Have made—and like a living grave.
 Below the surface of the lake
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
 We heard it ripple night and day;
 Sounding o'er our heads it knocked
 And I have felt the winter's spray
 Wash through the bars when winds were high
 And wanton in the happy sky;
 And then the very rock hath rocked,
 And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
 Because I would have smiled to see
 The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
 I said his mighty heart declined,
 He loathed and put away his food;
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
 For we were used to hunter's fare,
 And for the like had little care:

¹ **Lake Leman**—Lake Geneva.

The milk drawn from the mountain goat
 Was changed for water from the moat,
 Our bread was such as captive's tears
 Have moistened many a thousand years, 135
 Since man first pent his fellow men
 Like brutes within an iron den;
 But what were these to us or him?
 These wasted not his heart or limb;
 My brother's soul was of that mould 140
 Which in a palace had grown cold,
 Had his free breathing been denied
 The range of the steep mountain's side.
 But why delay the truth?—he died.
 I saw, and could not hold his head, 145
 Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
 Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
 To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
 He died, and they unlocked his chain,
 And scooped for him a shallow grave 150
 Even from the cold earth of our cave.
 I begged them, as a boon, to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
 But then within my brain it wrought, 155
 That even in death his freeborn breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest.
 I might have spared my idle prayer—
 They coldly laughed—and laid him there:
 The flat and turfless earth above 160
 The being we so much did love;
 His empty chain above it leant,
 Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
 Most cherished since his natal hour, 165

His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:—
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmixed with such—but sure and slow;
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress

Of fainting nature's feebleness,
 More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
 I listened, but I could not hear— 205
 I called, for I was wild with fear;
 I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
 Would not be thus admonishèd;
 I called, and thought I heard a sound—
 I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
 And rushed to him:—I found him not,
 I only stirred in this black spot,
 I only lived—I only drew
 The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
 The last—the sole—the dearest link 215
 Between me and the eternal brink,
 Which bound me to my failing race,
 Was broken in this fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath—
 My brothers—both had ceased to breathe; 220
 I took that hand which lay so still,
 Alas! my own was full as chill;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive—
 A frantic feeling, when we know 225
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope—but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well—I never knew—
 First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too:
 I had no thought, no feeling—none— 235
 Among the stones I stood a stone,

And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,
It was not night—it was not day, 240
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time— 245
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless! 250

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thank my eyes 255
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track, 260
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came 265
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me! 270

I never saw its like before,
 I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
 It seemed like me to want a mate,
 But was not half so desolate,
 And it was come to love me when
 None lived to love me so again,
 And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
 Had brought me back to feel and think.

275

I know not if it late were free,
 Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
 But knowing well captivity,
 Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!

280

Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
 A visitor from Paradise;
 For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
 Which made me both to weep and smile;

285

I sometimes deemed that it might be
 My brother's soul come down to me;
 But then at last away it flew,

And then 'twas mortal—well I knew,
 For he would never thus have flown,
 And left me twice so doubly lone,—

290

Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
 Lone—as a solitary cloud,

A single cloud on a sunny day,
 While all the rest of heaven is clear,
 A frown upon the atmosphere,
 That hath no business to appear

295

When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
 My keepers grew compassionate;
 I know not what had made them so,
 They were inured to sights of woe,
 But so it was:—my broken chain

300

With links unfastened did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

305

310

315

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

320

325

330

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,

335

And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
 I heard the torrents leap and gush
 O'er channelled rock and broken bush;
 I saw the white-walled distant town,
 And whiter sails go skimming down; 340
 And then there was a little isle,
 Which in my very face did smile,
 The only one in view;
 A small green isle it seemed no more,
 Scarce broader than my dungeon floor, 345
 But in it there were three tall trees,
 And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
 And by it there were waters flowing,
 And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue. 350
 The fish swam by the castle wall,
 And they seemed joyous each and all;
 The eagle rode the rising blast,
 Methought he never flew so fast
 As then to me he seemed to fly, 355
 And then new tears came in my eye,
 And I felt troubled—and would fain
 I had not left my recent chain;
 And when I did descend again,
 The darkness of my dim abode 360
 Fell on me as a heavy load;
 It was as is a new-dug grave,
 Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
 And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
 Had almost need of such a rest. 365

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
 I kept no count—I took no note,
 I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote;

At last men came to set me free,
 I asked not why, and recked not where,
 It was at length the same to me,
 Fettered or fetterless to be,
 I learned to love despair.
 And thus when they appeared at last,
 And all my bonds aside were cast,
 These heavy walls to me had grown
 A hermitage—and all my own!
 And half I felt as they were come
 To tear me from a second home:
 With spiders I had friendship made,
 And watched them in their sullen trade,
 Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
 And why should I feel less than they?
 We were all inmates of one place,
 And I, the monarch of each race,
 Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
 In quiet we had learned to dwell—
 My very chains and I grew friends,
 So much a long communion tends
 To make us what we are:—even I
 Regained my freedom with a sigh.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

GINEVRA

If ever you should come to Modena,
 (Where, among other relics, you may see
 Tassoni's bucket¹—but 'tis not the true one)
 Stop at a palace near the Reggio-gate,
 Dwelt in of old by one of the Donati.

¹ **Tassoni's bucket**—Tassoni was an Italian poet and critic of the sixteenth century. His most famous work is a mock-heroic poem celebrating a war between Modena and Bologna when the former carried off a bucket from the latter.

Its noble gardens, terrace above terrace,
 And rich in fountains, statues, cypresses,
 Will long detain you; but, before you go,
 Enter the house — forget it not, I pray you —
 And look awhile upon a picture there. 10

'Tis of a lady in her earliest youth,
 The last of that illustrious family,
 Done by Zampieri¹ — but by whom I care not.
 He who observes it, ere he passes on,
 Gazes his fill, and comes and comes again, 15
 That he may call it up when far away.

She sits inclining forward as to speak,
 Her lips half open, and her finger up,
 As though she said, "Beware!" Her vest of gold
 Broider'd with flowers, and clasp'd from head to 20
 foot,
 An emerald-stone in every golden clasp;
 And on her brow, fairer than alabaster,
 A coronet of pearls.

But then her face,
 So lovely, yet so arch, so full of mirth,
 The overflowings of an innocent heart — 25
 It haunts me still, though many a year has fled,
 Like some wild melody.

Alone it hangs
 Over a mouldering heirloom, its companion,
 An oaken chest, half eaten by the worm,
 But richly carved by Antony of Trent, 30
 With Scripture-stories from the life of Christ —
 A chest that came from Venice and had held
 The ducal robes of some old ancestor.
 That by the way — it may be true or false —
 But don't forget the picture; and you will not, 35
 When you have heard the tale they told me there.

¹ Zampieri—A painter of the sixteenth century.

She was an only child — her name Ginevra —
The joy, the pride of an indulgent father,
And in her fifteenth year became a bride,
Marrying an only son, Francesco Doria, 40
Her playmate from her birth, and her first love.

Just as she looks there in her bridal dress,
She was all gentleness, all gaiety,
Her pranks the favourite theme of every tongue.
But now the day was come, the day, the hour; 45
Now, frowning, smiling for the hundredth time,
The nurse, that ancient lady, preach'd decorum;
And, in the lustre of her youth, she gave
Her hand, with her heart in it, to Francesco.

Great was the joy; but at the nuptial feast, 50
When all sate down, the bride herself was wanting.
Nor was she to be found! Her father cried,
"'Tis but to make a trial of our love!'"

And fill'd his glass to all, but his hand shook,
And soon from guest to guest the panic spread. 55
'Twas but that instant she had left Francesco,
Laughing and looking back and flying still,
Her ivory tooth imprinted on his finger.
But now, alas! she was not to be found;
Nor from that hour could anything be guessed, 60
But that she was not.

Weary of his life,
Francesco flew to Venice, and, embarking,
Flung it away in battle with the Turk.
Donati lived; and long might you have seen
An old man wandering as in quest of something—65
Something he could not find — he knew not what.
When he was gone, the house remained a while
Silent and tenantless — then went to strangers.

Full fifty years were past, and all forgotten,
When on an idle day, a day of search 70
'Mid the old lumber in the gallery,
That mouldering chest was noticed; and 'twas said

By one as young, as thoughtless, as Ginevra,
 "Why not remove it from its lurking-place?"
 'Twas done as soon as said; but on the way
 It burst, it fell; and lo, a skeleton,
 With here and there a pearl, an emerald stone,
 A golden clasp, clasping a shred of gold!
 All else had perish'd, save a wedding-ring.
 And a small seal, her mother's legacy,
 Engraven with a name, the name of both,
 "Ginevra."

There then had she found a grave!
 Within that chest had she conceal'd herself,
 Fluttering with joy, the happiest of the happy,
 When a spring-lock, that lay in ambush there,
 Fasten'd her down forever!

SAMUEL ROGERS.

THE SWORD OF THE TOMB¹

"VOICE of the gifted elder time!
 Voice of the charm and the Runic rhyme!
 Speak! from the shades and the depths disclose,
 How Sigurd may vanquish his mortal foes;
 Voice of the buried past!"

"Voice of the grave! 'tis the mighty hour,
 When Night with her stars and dreams hath power,
 And my step hath been soundless on the snows,
 And the spell I have sung hath laid repose
 On the billow and the blast."

¹ **The Tomb**—"The sepulchral fire alluded to in this poem, and supposed to guard the ashes of deceased heroes, is frequently mentioned in the Northern Sagas. Severe sufferings to the departed spirit were supposed by the Scandinavian mythologists to be the consequences of any profanation of the sepulchre."—*Mrs. Hemans*.

Then the torrents of the North,
And the forest pines were still,
While a hollow chant came forth
From the dark sepulchral hill.

"There shines no sun 'midst the hidden dead,
But where the day looks not the brave may tread;
There is heard no song, and no mead is poured,
But the warrior may come to the silent board,
In the shadow of the night.

"There is laid a sword in thy father's tomb,
And its edge is fraught with thy foeman's doom;
But soft be thy step through the silence deep,
And move not the urn in the house of sleep,
For the viewless have fearful might!"

Then died the solemn lay,
As a trumpet's music dies,
By the night-wind borne away
Through the wild and stormy skies.

The fir-trees rocked to the wailing blast,
As on through the forest the warrior passed,—
Through the forest of Odin,¹ the dim and old,
The dark place of visions and legends, told
By the fires of Northern pine.

The fir-trees rocked, and the frozen ground
Gave back to his footstep a hollow sound;
And it seemed that the depths of those awful shades,
From the dreary gloom of their long arcades
Gave warning with voice and sign.

But the wind strange magic knows,
To call wild shape and tone
From the grey wood's tossing boughs,
When Night is on her throne.

¹ **Odin**—The chief of the Norse gods.

The pines closed o'er him with deeper gloom,
As he took the path to the monarch's tomb;
The Pole-star shone, and the heavens were bright
With the arrowy streams of the Northern light,
But his road through dimness lay!

45

He passed, in the heart of that ancient wood
The dark shrine stained with the victim's blood:
Nor paused, till the rock where a vaulted bed
Had been hewn of old for the kingly dead,
Arose on his midnight way.

50

Then first a moment's chill
Went shuddering through his breast,
And the steel-clad man stood still
Before that place of rest.

55

But he crossed at length, with a deep-drawn breath,
The threshold-floor of the hall of Death,
And looked on the pale mysterious fire
Which gleamed from the urn of his warrior-sire,
With a strange and solemn light.

60

Then darkly the words of the boding strain
Like an omen rose on his soul again,—
“Soft be thy step through the silence deep,
And move not the urn in the house of sleep,
For the viewless have fearful might!”

65

But the gleaming sword and shield
Of many a battle-day
Hung o'er that urn, revealed
By the tomb-fire's waveless ray.

70

45 With a faded wreath of oak-leaves bound,
They hung o'er the dust of the far-renowned,
Whom the bright Valkyriur's¹ warning voice
Had called to the banquet where gods rejoice,
And the rich mead flows in light.

75

50 With a beating heart his son drew near,
And still rang the verse in his thrilling ear,—
"Soft be thy step through the silence deep,
And move not the urn in the house of sleep,
For the viewless have fearful might!"

80

55 And many a Saga's² rhyme,
And legend of the grave,
That shadowy scene and time
Called back to daunt the brave.

60 But he raised his arm — and the flame grew dim, 85
And the sword in its light seemed to wave and swim,
And his faltering hand could not grasp it well —
From the pale oak-wreath, with a clash it fell
Through the chamber of the dead!

65 The deep tomb rang with the heavy sound, 90
And the urn lay shivered in fragments round;
And a rush, as of tempests, quenched the fire,
And the scattered dust of his warlike sire
Was strewn on the Champion's head.

¹ **Valkyriur**—The Valkyriurs, or Valkyries, were maidens sent by Odin to choose for him from the field of battle the bravest warriors. The warriors were carried to Valhalla, where they feasted and trained themselves for the last great fight in which the powers of evil should be arrayed against the powers of good under their great leader Odin. The Valkyries are frequently called "The choosers of the slain."

² **Saga**—An ancient Scandinavian tale.

One moment — and all was still
In the slumberer's ancient hall,
When the rock had ceased to thrill
With the mighty weapon's fall.

95

The stars were just fading, one by one,
The clouds were just tinged by the early sun,
When there streamed through the cavern a torch's
flame,
And the brother of Sigurd the valiant came
To seek him in the tomb.

100

Stretched on his shield, like the steel-girt slain,
By moonlight seen on the battle-plain,
In a speechless trance lay the warrior there,
But he wildly woke when the torch's glare
Burst on him through the gloom.

105

“The morning wind blows free,
And the hour of chase is near:
Come forth, come forth, with me!
What dost thou, Sigurd, here?”

110

“I have put out the holy sepulchral fire,
I have scattered the dust of my warrior-sire!
It burns on my head, and it weighs down my heart;
But the winds shall not wander without their part
To strew o'er the restless deep!

“In the mantle of death he was here with me now,—
There was wrath in his eye, there was gloom on his brow
And his cold; still glance on my spirit fell
With an icy ray and a withering spell —
Oh! chill is the house of sleep!”

120

"The morning wind blows free,
And the reddening sun shines clear;
Come forth, come forth, with me!
It is dark and fearful here!"

125

"He is there, he is there, with his shadowy frown!
But gone from his head is the kingly crown.—
The crown from his head, and the spear from his hand,—
They have chased him far from the glorious land
Where the feast of the gods is spread!

130

"He must go forth alone on his phantom steed,
He must ride o'er the grave-hills with stormy speed;
His place is no longer at Odin's board,
He is driven from Valhalla¹ without his sword!
But the slayer shall avenge the dead!"

135

That sword its fame had won
By the fall of many a crest,
But its fiercest work was done
In the tomb, on Sigurd's breast!

140

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS.

PHOKAIA²

I WILL tell you a tale of an ancient city of men,
Of men that were men in truth:
The world grows wide now; 'twas smaller and goodlier
then,
And the busy shores of the little islanded sea
Were filled with a beautiful folk,

5

¹ **Valhalla**—The Hall of Odin in Asgard, the Norse heaven.

² **Phokaia**—Phokaia, or Phocæa, was the most northerly of the cities of the Ionian Confederacy in Asia Minor. During the Persian conquest of Asia Minor, Phokaia was besieged by Harpalus. The citizens, rather than surrender, embarked in their ships and sailed away in search of a new home.

A people of children and sages, untouched by the yoke,
 Eager, far-venturing, fearless and free,
 In the pride and glory of youth.

Phokaia the city was named, built on a northern strand
 Of the old bright-watered, sunny, Ionian land. ¹⁰

For many an age its marts had flourished: the city had
 grown

Famous and rich: and far from the East to the West
 The sounds of the sea and the opening waters were
 sown

With their long swift ships. The hands of its sailors
 had pressed,

With venturesome gains and many a toilful escape, ¹⁵
 Dreaded Pachynus¹ long since: and its glistening oars,
 Farther and farther each year, past the Sicilian cape,
 Out from the gates of the ocean,² past Tartessus,³ had
 found

Havens of trade with wonderful men, and the sound
 Of unknown waves on unknown measureless shores. ²⁰
 And fair was the city now with an eager and mingled
 throng

Of people and princes, with festival, art, and song;
 And busy its workshops were: the fruit of their myriad
 hands

Drew traffic, and praise, and gold out of many lands.

But life is like the uncertain sea, ²⁵
 And some day, somewhere, surely falls
 The fierce inevitable storm:
 Thrice-happy in that hour shall be

¹ **Pachynus**—A cape on the south-east of Sicily.

² **gates of the ocean**—The Pillars of Hercules, on either side of what is now known as the Straits of Gibraltar.

³ **Tartessus**—An ancient town in Spain west of the Pillars of Hercules.

The ship whose decks are clear, whose walls
 Of timber are still sound, whose prow 30
 Is captained by no cowering form,
 But a bright mind and an unflinching brow.

The long fair peace was over. An ominous star
 Dawned on the land of the Hellenes, livid with war.
 For far away in the East a conquering tyrant¹ rose, 35
 And the lords of the earth were smitten, and laid their
 crowns
 At the Great King's feet. Like a pitiless storm-black
 cloud,
 Out of the Lydian valleys, sudden and loud,
 The foemen gathered with sword and fire and began
 to close
 Round the sweet sea-fields and the soft Ionian towns. 40
 Some held to their own and fell,
 And many fought and surrendered, and left no tale to
 tell;

And one that was richly fee'd
 Purchased a shameful pact by a bloody and impious
 deed.
 At last they came to Phokaia, and harried the plain, 45
 And leaguered its walls, and battered its gates in vain,
 For the citizens stood to their posts like heroes, and
 fought,
 Till the Persian dead were many and no good wrought.
 And then, for their strength was needed in other lands,
 The foe drew off, and sent a herald, and cried: 50
 "O men of Phokaia, the Persians seek at your hands
 Nor service, nor tribute but only this; tear down,
 For a sign of homage and faith to our master's crown,
 A single turret of all your walls, and set aside
 One roof for the Great King's use in your ample town, 55

¹ **conquering tyrant**—Cyrus, the king of the Persians, who lived at this time, finished his conquest of the Lydian kingdom under Croesus its king

And ye shall possess your city untouched, your gods
and your laws."

And well the Phokaians knew what the end must be,
For their foes were many as waves on the island sea;
They were alone, alone with a ruined cause.

And so they demanded a day for counsel and choice, ⁶⁰
And the people met and cried with a single voice:

"Dear are the seats of our gods, and dear is the name
Of our beautiful land, but we will not hold them with
shame.

Let us take to the ships, for the shores of the sea are
wide,

And its waves are free, and wherever our keels shall
ride, ⁶⁵

There are sites for a hundred Phokaias."

Swift as the thought,
They turned like a torrent out of the market, and rolled
Down to the docks, and manned them, a multitude,
young and old;

And ran the long ships into the sea, and brought
Their wives and little ones down to the shining shore, ⁷⁰
And gathered the best of their goods, and the things
of gold,

And the sacred altars and vessels, a priceless store;
And, moving ever in pride and sorrow silently,
They put them into the ships, and embarked, and
smote the sea,

Each ship with its fifty glimmering oars, and far
behind, ⁷⁵

In the cooling heart of the dusk and the soft night wind,
Left the beloved docks and the city, proud and fair,
A lonely prey to the Persians empty and bare.

And first they halted at Chios, a people, they thought,
of friends,

And sought a home at their hands, but the island men, ⁸⁰
Looking with crafty eyes to their selfish ends,

And dreading the mighty traders, whose ships in the
bay

Lay like a glimmering cloud beyond count or ken,
Gave them faint cheer and bade them coldly away.
The grim Phokaiaians lay for an hour or two on their
path, 85

Heavy with grief and heavier still with wrath,
Till the pride of the people sprang forth in a single word,
And they turned them back to Phokaia, and fell with
the sword

On the startled Persian garrison, smitten with dread,
And hewed them down to a man, and left them dead; 90
And they laid a curse on the city, and sank a weight
Of red-hot hissing iron at the harbour gate,
With a vow to return no more till the time should be,
When the iron, so sunk, should appear red-hot from the
sea.

And then once more from the desolate harbour mouth 95
They turned the tall prows round, and headed to west
and south,

Through many an islanded strait, where the bright sea
shone,

With bellying sails and plunging oars, and ran straight
on,

Past Melos and Malea, past the Laconian bay,
Into the open main. On the windy decks all day 100
The little children played, and the mothers with wistful
eyes

Looked forth on the crests of the wild and widening sea
Full of regrets and misgivings and tender memories:
But the men stood keen and unanxious, whatever
might be,

For the heads of the people had gathered and issued
command: 105

"We will build us another Phokaia far hence in a land
That is ringed all around with the surf-beaten guardian
strand

Of the ocean: in Kyrnos,¹ an isle once peopled, for there
 the prince,
 Our sire Iolaus,² made halt, and settled long since
 With the Thespian children of Herakles,³ founding a
 home,
 Crowned with impregnable hills and circled with
 foam."

110

For stormy times and ruined plans
 Make keener the determined will,
 And Fate with all its gloomy bans
 Is but the spirit's vassal still:
 And that deep force, that made aspire
 Man from dull matter and the beast,
 Burns sleeplessly a spreading fire,
 By every thrust and wind increased.

115

And so the Phokaians sailed on,
 Through seas rough-laughing in stormy play,
 Till many a watchful day,
 And many a toil-broken anxious night were gone;
 And the ridges of Kyrnos appeared, and they stranded
 the ships,
 And set up the shrines of the gods, and with eloquent
 lips
 And giftful hands besought them for prosperous days;
 But the land was rough and uncleared,
 And a hostile people dwelt in its bays,
 And the old blithe kin, no longer counted or feared,
 Were few and their glorious seed
 Was mixed with a barbarous breed.

120

125

130

¹ **Kyrnos**—Sardinia.

² **Iolaus**—A Thessalian prince who assisted Herakles to conquer the Hydra. At the head of the Heraklidæ he founded a settlement in Sardinia and was there buried.

³ **Herakles**—Hercules. The fifty sons of Herakles, who were all grandsons of Thespius, king of Thespis, were known as the Heraklidæ.

Even the sea was scanned
 By the jealous eye of an ancient sea-faring foe,
 And so the Phokaians were thwarted, and trouble con-
 tinued to grow,
 And failure was ever at hand. 135

For five dark years they fought with their fate, and
 then
 A famine lay hard on the folk, and their desperate
 men

Put forth in the open day
 In their long swift ships, and harried the sea for prey:
 And a great fleet came from Carthage out of the
 west, 140

And fell on the Phokaians, and when the battle was
 done,

The sons of Phokaia stood firm, and the day was won;
 But a host of their ships were shattered or sunk, and
 the rest

Lay on the sea, half-manned, like birds with broken
 wings:

And the remnant took counsel again and said: 145
 "The gods are ill-pleased, and their bountiful care has
 ceased;

But ever good at the last our Father Poseidon¹ brings.
 Let us choose anew, by a holier guidance led."
 And again were the half-built roofs and the luckless
 springs

Forsaken and cursed; and forth in their ships once
 more, 150

With their wistful wives and their young and their
 dwindled store,

The grim Phokaians sailed: and now they turned to
 the east,

Recalling some ancient oracle; and favoured at last,

¹ **Poseidon**—The god of the sea, the Neptune of the Romans.

With omens and fortunate winds they sped on their
way,

Till the giant forges, the islands of fire,¹ were passed, ¹⁵³

And they came on a day

To a little port on a sunny rock-built shore.

And a beckoning blessing came down, an odorous air,

From hills, far off, that were bright with olive and vine;

And a god-given spirit of peace, a pleasure divine, ¹⁶⁰

Rose in their hearts, long-troubled and seared with care,

When they looked on the land and saw that the haven
was fair.

And the word of the god was true;

The days of their evil plight

Were broken and ended at last; on a fair new site, ¹⁶⁵

Afar from the track of their foes,

A little city upgrew,

With the bloom and the flushing strength of an open-
ing rose,

Hyele named.

And their sea-faring vigour of trade ¹⁷⁰

Returned to the sons of Phokaia, honoured and famed

For daring and skill and endurance: but noblest and
best

In all the old world towns from the east to the west,
The gathering schools of their strenuous city were
made

Famous² for knowledge and wisdom, famous for
song: ¹⁷⁵

And humanly sweet and strong,

Over all the world the seed of their teaching was
spread

¹ **islands of fire**—Sicily, where were situated the forges of the Cyclopes, the workmen of Hephaistos or Vulcan.

² **famous**—Many poets and philosophers were attracted by the Phokaian colony and settled there.

By the Delphic¹ lips of poets, endless in youth;
 For insight and splendour of mind
 Not they that are yielding and lovers of ease shall
 find, 180
 But only of strength comes wisdom, only of faith comes
 truth.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

RHÆCUS

God sends His teachers unto every age;
 To every clime and every race of men,
 With revelations fitted to their growth
 And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth 5
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
 Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
 The life of man, and given it to grasp
 The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
 Infolds some germs of goodness and of right;
 Else never had the eager soul, which loathes 10
 The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
 Found in it even moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart
 Which makes that all the fables it hath coined,
 To justify the reign of its belief 15
 And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,
 Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
 Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,
 Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.
 For, as in Nature naught is made in vain, 20
 But all things have within their hull of use
 A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
 Of spiritual secrets to the ear
 Of spirit; so, in whatsoe'er th- heart
 Hath fashioned for a solace to itself, 25
 To make its inspirations suit its creed,

¹ **Delphic**—Speaking with all the force and authority of the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi.

And from the niggard hands of falsehood wring
 Its needful food of truth, there ever is
 A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,
 Not less than her own works, pure gleams of light 20
 And earnest parables of inward lore.
 Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,
 As full of gracious youth and beauty still
 As the immortal freshness of that grace
 Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze. 25

A youth named Rhœcus, wandering in the wood,
 Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
 And, feeling pity for so fair a tree,
 He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,
 And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on. 40
 But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
 That murmured "Rhœcus!" 'Twas as if the leaves,
 Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it,
 And, while he paused bewildered, yet again
 It murmured "Rhœcus!" softer than a breeze. 45
 He started, and beheld with dizzy eyes
 What seemed the substance of a happy dream
 Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow
 Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.
 It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too fair 50
 To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
 For any that were wont to mate with gods.
 "Rhœcus, I am the Dryad¹ of this tree,"
 Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words
 Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew, 55
 "And with it I am doomed to live and die;
 The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
 Nor have I other bliss than simple life;
 Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,
 And with a thankful joy it shall be thine." 60

¹ **Dryad**—Nymphs of the woods, whose special care was the trees.

Then Rhœcus, with a flutter at the heart,
 Yet, by the prompting of such beauty bold,
 Answered: "What is there that can satisfy
 The endless craving of the soul but love?
 Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
 Which must be evermore my spirit's goal."
 After a little pause she said again,
 But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
 "I give it, Rhœcus, though a perilous gift;
 An hour before the sunset meet me here."
 And straightway there was nothing he could see
 But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,
 And not a sound came to his straining ears
 But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
 And far away upon an emerald slope
 The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and faith,
 Men did not think that happy things were dreams
 Because they overstepped the narrow bourn
 Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
 Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
 To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
 So Rhœcus made no doubt that he was blest,
 And all along unto the city's gate
 Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,
 The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,
 And he could scarce believe he had not wings,
 Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins,
 Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

Young Rhœcus had a faithful heart enough,
 But one that in the present dwelt too much,
 And, taking with blithe welcome whatso'er
 Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,
 Like the contented peasant of a vale,
 Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.

So, haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the dice,
He joined them, and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,
And Rhœcus, who had met but sorry luck, 100
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
When through the room there hummed a yellow bee
That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs
As if to light. And Rhœcus laughed and said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss, 105
“By Venus¹! does he take me for a rose?”
And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand.
But still the bee came back, and thrice again
Rhœcus did beat him off with growing wrath.
Then through the window flew the wounded bee, 110
And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry eyes,
Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly
Against the red disk of the setting sun,—
And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
As if its very walls had caved away. 115
Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,
Ran madly through the city and the gate,
And o’er the plain, which now the wood’s long shade,
By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,
Darkened well-nigh unto the city’s wall. 120

Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,
And, listening fearfully, he heard once more
The low voice murmur “Rhœcus!” close at hand:
Whereat he looked around him, but could see
Naught but the deepening glooms beneath the oak. 125
Then, sighed the voice “O Rhœcus! nevermore
Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love

¹ **Venus**—The goddess of love, the Aphrodite of the Greeks.

More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
 Filled up with nectar any mortal heart: 130
 But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
 And sent'st him back to me with bruised wings.
 We spirits only show to gentle eyes,
 We ever ask an undivided love,
 And he who scorns the least of Nature's works 135
 Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
 Farewell! for thou canst never see me more."

Then Rhœcus beat his breast and groaned aloud,
 And cried, "Be pitiful! forgive me yet
 This once, and I shall never need it more!" 140
 "Alas!" the voice returned, "'tis thou art blind,
 Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,
 But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
 Only the soul hath power o'er itself."
 With that again there murmured "Nevermore!" 145
 And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,
 Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,
 Like the long surf upon a distant shore,
 Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
 The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain 150
 The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
 And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
 Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
 With all its bright sublimity of stars,
 Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze: 155
 Beauty was all around him and delight,
 But from that eve he was alone on earth.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

KING OSWALD'S FEAST

THE king had laboured all an autumn day
For his folk's good and welfare of the kirk,
And now when eventide was well away,
And deepest mirk

Lay heavy on York town, he sat at meat, 5
With his great councillors round him and his kin,
And a blithe face was sat in every seat,
And far within

The hall was jubilant with banqueting,
The tankards foaming high as they could hold 10
With mead, the plates well-heaped, and everything
Was served with gold.

Then came to the king's side the doorkeeper,
And said: "The folk are thronging at the gate,
And flaunt their rags and many complaints prefer, 15
And through the grate

"I see that many are ill-clad and lean,
For fields are poor this year, and food hard-won."
And the good king made answer, "'Twere ill seen 20
And foully done,

"Were I to feast while many starve without;"
And he bade bear the most and best of all
To give the folk; and lo, they raised a shout
That shook the hall.

And now lean fare for those at board was set, 25
But came again the doorkeeper and cried:
The folk still hail thee, sir, nor will they yet
Be satisfied;

"They say they have no surety for their lives,
When winters bring hard nights and heatless suns, 30
Nor bread, nor raiment have they for their wives
And little ones."

Then said the king: "It is not well that I
Should eat from gold, when many are so poor,
For he that guards his greatness guards a lie; 35
Of that be sure."

And so he bade collect the golden plate,
And all the tankards, and break up, and bear,
And gave them to the folk that thronged the gate, 40
To each his share.

And the great councillors in cold surprise
Looked on and murmured; but unmindfully
The king sat dreaming with far-fixèd eyes,
And it may be

He saw some vision of that Holy One 45
Who knew no rest or shelter for His head,
When self was scorned and brotherhood begun.
"'Tis just," he said:

"Henceforward wood shall serve me for my plate,
And earthen cups suffice me for my mead; 50
With them that joy or travail at my gate
I laugh or bleed."

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

THE SANDS OF DEE

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;"

The western wind was wild and dank with foam, ⁵
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand, '
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see. 10
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drownèd maiden's hair 15
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam, 20
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

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